LETTERS

CONCERNING THE

ENGLISH NATION.

Eliz BY Kinkead

Mr. DE VOLTAIRE.

The Fourth EDITION.

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M,DCC,XXX,X.

A 2

THE

PREFACE.

THE preſent Work appears with Confidence in the Kingdom that gave Birth to it: And will be well ſatisfied with its Fortune, if it meets with as favourable a Reception as has been indulged to all the other Compoſitions of its Author. The high Eſteem which Mr. *de Voltaire* has always diſcovered for the *Engliſh*, is a Proof how ambitious he is of their Approbation. It is now grown familiar to

him, but then he is not tired with it; and indeed one would be apt to think that this Circumſtance is pleaſing to the Nation, from the ſtrong Deſire they have to peruſe whatever is publiſhed under his Name.

WITHOUT pretending therefore to any great Penetration, we may venture to aſſure him, that his Letters will meet with all the Succeſs that could be wiſhed. Mr. *de Voltaire* is the Author of them, they were written in *London*, and relate particularly to the *Engliſh* Nation; three Circumſtances which muſt neceſſarily recommend them. The great Freedom with which Mr. *de Voltaire* delivers himſelf in his various Obſervations, cannot

give him any Apprehenſions of their being leſs favourably received upon that Account, by a judicious People who abhor Flattery. The *Engliſh* are pleaſed to have their Faults pointed out to them, becauſe this ſhews at the ſame Time, that the Writer is able to diſtinguiſh their Merit.

We muſt however confeſs that theſe Letters were not deſigned for the Publick. They are the Reſult of the Author's Complacency and Friendſhip for Mr. *Thiriot*, who had deſired him, during his Stay in *England*, to favour him with ſuch Remarks as he might make on the Manners and Cuſtoms of the *Britiſh* Nation. It is well known

that

that in a Correſpondence of this kind, the moſt juſt and regular Writer does not propoſe to obſerve any Method. Mr. *de Voltaire* in all Probability followed no other Rule in the Choice of his Subjects than his particular Taſte, or perhaps the Queries of his Friend. Be this as it will, it was thought that the moſt natural Order in which they could be placed, would be that of their reſpective Dates. Several Particulars which are mentioned in them make it neceſſary for us to obſerve, that they were written between the latter End of 1728, and about 1731. The only Thing that can be regretted on this Occaſion is, that ſo agreeable a Correſpondence ſhould have continued no longer.

The PREFACE.

THE Reader will no doubt obſerve, that the Circumſtances in every Letter which had not an immediate relation to the Title of it, have been omitted. This was done on purpoſe; for Letters written with the Confidence and Simplicity of perſonal Friendſhip, generally include certain Things which are not proper for the Preſs. The Publick indeed thereby often loſe a great many agreeable Particulars; but why ſhould they complain, if the want of them is compenſated by a thouſand Beauties of another kind? The Variety of the Subjects, the Graces of the Diction, the Solidity of the Reflections, the delicate Turn of the Criticiſm; in fine, the noble Fire which

which enlivens all the Compoſitions of Mr. *de Voltaire* delight the Reader perpetually. Even the moſt ſerious Letters, ſuch as thoſe which relate to Sir *Iſaac Newton*'s Philoſophy, will be found entertaining. Mr. *de Voltaire* remembered, that he was writing to Mankind in general, and all are not Philoſophers. He has infuſed into his Subject all the delicate Touches it was ſuſceptible of; deep and abſtruſe enough to ſhew that he was Maſter of it, and always perſpicuous enough to be underſtood.

Some of his *Engliſh* Readers may perhaps be diſſatisfied at his not expatiating farther on their Conſtitution and their Laws, which moſt of them re-

vere

vere almoſt to Idolatry; but this Reſervedneſs is an Effect of Mr. *de Voltaire*'s Judgment. He contented himſelf with giving his Opinion of them in general Reflections, the Caſt of which is entirely new, and which prove that he had made this Part of the *Britiſh* Polity his particular Study. Beſides, how was it poſſible for a Foreigner to pierce through their Politicks, that gloomy Labyrinth, in which ſuch of the *Engliſh* themſelves as are beſt acquainted with it, confeſs daily, that they are bewildered and loſt?

While this Work was in the Preſs, there came to *London* a Manuſcript Letter of Mr. *de Voltaire*, in anſwer to the Complaints

plaints made by the Citizens of *Hamburgh* againſt a Paſſage in the Hiſtory of *Charles* the Twelfth, relating to the Burning of *Altena*. We thought proper to inſert that Letter here, for the Uſe of thoſe who have the Hiſtory of *Charles* the Twelfth in *Engliſh* only.

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LETTERS
Concerning the
ENGLISH NATION.

LETTER I.
ON THE
QUAKERS.

I Was of opinion, that the doctrine and history of so extraordinary a people, were worthy the attention of the curious. To acquaint myself with them, I made a visit to one of the most eminent Quakers in *England*; who, after having traded thirty years, had the wisdom

to preſcribe limits to his fortune and to his deſires, and was ſettled in a little ſolitude not far from *London*. Being come into it, I perceived a ſmall, but regularly built houſe, very neat, but without the leaſt pomp of furniture. The Quaker who owned it, was a hale ruddy complexioned old man, who had never been afflicted with ſickneſs, becauſe he had always been inſenſible to paſſions, and a perfect ſtranger to intemperance. I never in my life ſaw a more noble or a more engaging aſpect than his. He was dreſſed like thoſe of his perſuaſion, in a plain coat without pleats in the ſides, or buttons on the pockets and ſleeves; and had on a beaver, the brims of which were horizontal, like thoſe of our clergy. He did not uncover himſelf when I appeared, and advanced towards me without once ſtooping his body; but there appeared more politeneſs in the open, humane air of his countenance, than in the cuſtom of drawing one leg behind the other, and taking that from the head, which is made to cover it. Friend, ſays he to me, I perceive thou art a ſtranger, but if I can do any thing for thee, only tell me. Sir, ſays I to him, bending forwards, and advancing as is uſual with us, one leg towards

wards him, I flatter myſelf that my juſt curioſity will not give you the leaſt offence, and that you will do me the honour to inform me of the particulars of your religion. The people of thy country, replied the Quaker, are too full of their bows and compliments, but I never yet met with one of them who had ſo much curioſity as thy ſelf. Come in, and let us firſt dine together. I ſtill continued to make ſome very unſeaſonable ceremonies, it not being eaſy to diſengage one's ſelf at once from habits we have been long uſed to; and after taking part of a frugal meal, which began and ended with a prayer to God, I began to queſtion my courteous hoſt. I opened with that which good Catholicks have more than once made to Huguenots. My dear ſir, ſays I, were you ever baptized? I never was replied the Quaker, nor any of my brethren. Zouns, ſays I to him, you are not Chriſtians then. Friend, replies the old man in a ſoft tone of voice, ſwear not; we are Chriſtians, and endeavour to be good Chriſtians, but we are not of opinion, that the ſprinkling water on a child's head makes him a Chriſtian. Heavens! ſays I, ſhocked at his impiety, you have then forgot that *Chriſt* was baptized

by St. *John*. Friend, replies the mild Quaker once again, ſwear not. *Chriſt* indeed was baptized by *John*, but he himſelf never baptized any one. We are the diſciples of *Chriſt*, not of *John*. I pitied very much the ſincerity of my worthy Quaker, and was abſolutely for forcing him to get himſelf chriſtned. Were that all, replied he very gravely, we would ſubmit chearfully to baptiſm, purely in compliance with thy weakneſs, for we do not condemn any perſon who uſeth it; but then we think, that thoſe who profeſs a religion of ſo holy, ſo ſpiritual a nature as that of *Chriſt*, ought to abſtain to the utmoſt of their power from the *Jewiſh* ceremonies. O unaccountable! ſays I, what! baptiſm a *Jewiſh* ceremony? Yes, my friend ſays he, ſo truly *Jewiſh*, that a great many *Jews* uſe the baptiſm of *John* to this day. Look into ancient authors, and thou wilt find that *John* only revived this practice; and that it had been uſed by the *Hebrews*, long before his time, in like manner as the Mahometans imitated the *Iſhmaelites* in the pilgrimages to *Mecca*. *Jeſus* indeed ſubmitted to the baptiſm of *John*, as he had ſuffered himſelf to be circumciſed; but circumciſion and the waſhing with water

ought

ought to be aboliſhed by the baptiſm of *Chriſt*, that baptiſm of the ſpirit, that ablution of the ſoul, which is the ſalvation of mankind. Thus the forerunner ſaid, *I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance; but he that cometh after me, is mightier than I, whoſe ſhoes I am not worthy to bear; he ſhall baptize you with the Holy Ghoſt and with fire* *. Likewiſe *Paul* the great apoſtle of the Gentiles, writes as follows to the *Corinthians*; *Chriſt ſent me not to baptize, but to preach the Goſpel* †; and indeed *Paul* never baptized but two perſons with water, and that very much againſt his inclinations. He circumciſed his diſciple *Timothy*, and the other diſciples likewiſe circumciſed all who were willing to ſubmit to that carnal ordinance. But art thou circumciſed, added he? I have not the honour to be ſo, ſays I. Well friend, continues the Quaker, thou art a Chriſtian without being circumciſed, and I am one without being baptized. Thus did this pious man make a wrong, but very ſpecious application, of four or five texts of ſcripture, which ſeemed to favour the tenets of his ſect;

* Matth. iii. 11. † 1 Cor. i. 17.

but at the ſame time forgot very ſincerely an hundred texts which made directly againſt them. I had more ſenſe than to conteſt with him, ſince there is no poſſibility of convincing an enthuſiaſt. A man ſhould never pretend to inform a lover of his miſtreſs's faults, no more than one who is at law, of the badneſs of his cauſe; nor attempt to win over a fanatic by ſtrength of reaſoning. Accordingly I waved the ſubject.

Well, ſays I to him, what ſort of a communion have you? We have none like that thou hinteſt at among us, replied he. How! no communion, ſays I? Only that ſpiritual one, replied he, of hearts. He then began again to throw out his texts of ſcripture; and preached a moſt eloquent ſermon againſt that ordinance. He harangued in a tone as though he had been inſpired, to prove that the ſacraments were merely of human invention, and that the word *ſacrament*, was not once mentioned in the goſpel. Excuſe, ſays he, my ignorance, for I have not employed an hundredth part of the arguments which might be brought, to prove the truth of our religion, but theſe thou thy ſelf mayeſt peruſe in the Expoſition of our Faith written by *Robert Barclay*. It is one of the beſt pieces that ever

ever was penned by man; and as our adverſaries confeſs it to be of dangerous tendency, the arguments in it muſt neceſſarily be very convincing. I promiſed to peruſe this piece, and my Quaker imagined he had already made a convert of me. He afterwards gave me an account in few words, of ſome ſingularities which make this ſect the contempt of others. Confeſs, ſays he, that it was very difficult for thee to refrain from laughter, when I anſwered all thy civilities without uncovering my head, and at the ſame time ſaid *Thee* and *Thou* to thee. However, thou appeareſt to me too well read, not to know that in *Chriſt*'s time no nation was ſo ridiculous as to put the plural number for the ſingular. *Auguſtus Cæſar* himſelf was ſpoke to in ſuch phraſes as theſe, *I love thee, I beſeech thee, I thank thee*; but he did not allow any perſon to call him *Domine*, Sir. It was not till many ages after, that men would have the word *You*, as though they were double, inſtead of *Thou* employed in ſpeaking to them; and uſurped the flattering titles of lordſhip, of eminence, and of holineſs, which mere worms beſtow on other worms, by aſſuring them that they are with a moſt profound reſpect, and an infamous falſhood,

their

their moſt obedient, humble ſervants. It is to ſecure our ſelves more ſtrongly from ſuch a ſhameleſs traffick of lies and flattery, that we *thee* and *thou* a king with the ſame freedom as we do a beggar, and ſalute no perſon; we owing nothing to mankind but charity, and to the laws reſpect and obedience.

Our apparel is alſo ſomewhat different from that of others, and this purely, that it may be a perpetual warning to us not to imitate them. Others wear the badges and marks of their ſeveral dignities, and we thoſe of chriſtian humility. We fly from all aſſemblies of pleaſure, from diverſions of every kind, and from places where gaming is practiſed; and indeed our caſe would be very deplorable, ſhould we fill with ſuch levities as thoſe I have mentioned, the heart which ought to be the habitation of God. We never ſwear, not even in a court of juſtice, being of opinion that the moſt holy name of God ought not to be proſtituted in the miſerable conteſts betwixt man and man. When we are obliged to appear before a magiſtrate upon other people's account, (for law ſuits are unknown among the friends) we give evidence to the truth by ſealing it with our *yea* or *nay*; and the judges believe

believe us on our bare affirmation, whilſt ſo many other Chriſtians forſwear themſelves on the holy Goſpels. We never war or fight in any caſe; but it is not that we are afraid, for ſo far from ſhuddering at the thoughts of death, we on the contrary bleſs the moment which unites us with the Being of Beings; but the reaſon of our not uſing the outward ſword is, that we are neither wolves, tygers, nor maſtiffs, but men and Chriſtians. Our God, who hath commanded us to love our enemies, and to ſuffer without repining, would certainly not permit us to croſs the ſeas, merely becauſe murtherers cloathed in ſcarlet, and wearing caps two foot high enliſt citizens by a noiſe made with two little ſticks on an aſs's skin extended. And when, after a victory is gained, the whole city of *London* is illuminated; when the ſky is in a blaze with fireworks, and a noiſe is heard in the air of thankſgivings, of bells, of organs, and of the cannon, we groan in ſilence, and are deeply affected with ſadneſs of ſpirit and brokenneſs of heart, for the ſad havock which is the occaſion of thoſe publick rejoycings.

LETTER II.

LETTER II.

ON THE

QUAKERS.

SUCH was the ſubſtance of the converſation I had with this very ſingular perſon; but I was greatly ſurprized to ſee him come the *Sunday* following, and take me with him to the Quaker's meeting. There are ſeveral of theſe in *London*, but that which he carried me to, ſtands near the famous pillar called the Monument. The brethren were already aſſembled at my entering it with my guide. There might be about four hundred men and three hundred women in the meeting. The women hid their faces behind their fans, and the men were covered with their broad brimmed hats; all were ſeated, and the ſilence was univerſal. I paſt through them, but did not perceive ſo much as one lift up his eyes to look at me. This ſilence laſted a quarter of an hour, when at laſt one of them roſe up, took off his

his hat, and after making a variety of wry faces, and groaning in a moſt lamentable manner, he partly from his noſe, and partly from his mouth, threw out a ſtrange confuſed jumble of words (borrowed as he imagined from the Goſpel) which neither himſelf nor any of his hearers underſtood. When this diſtorter had ended his beautiful ſoliloquy, and that the ſtupid, but greatly edified congregation were ſeparated, I asked my friend, how it was poſſible for the judicious part of their aſſembly to ſuffer ſuch a babling. We are obliged, ſays he, to ſuffer it, becauſe no one knows when a man riſes up to hold forth, whether he will be moved by the ſpirit or by folly. In this doubt and uncertainty we liſten patiently to every one, we even allow our women to hold forth; two or three of theſe are often inſpired at one and the ſame time, and it is then that a moſt charming noiſe is heard in the Lord's houſe. You have then no prieſts, ſays I to him. No, no, friend, replies the Quaker, to our great happineſs. Then opening one of the friend's books, as he called it, he read the following words in an emphatic tone: God forbid we ſhould preſume to ordain any one to receive the holy ſpirit

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on the Lord's day, to the prejudice of the reſt of the brethren. Thanks to the almighty, we are the only people upon earth that have no prieſts. Wouldeſt thou deprive us of ſo happy a diſtinction? Why ſhould we abandon our babe to mercenary nurſes, when we our ſelves have milk enough for it? Theſe mercenary creatures would ſoon domineer in our houſes, and deſtroy both the mother and the babe. God hath ſaid, freely you have received, freely give. Shall we after theſe words cheapen, as it were, the Goſpel; ſell the Holy Ghoſt, and make of an aſſembly of Chriſtians a mere ſhop of traders. We do not pay a ſet of men cloathed in black, to aſſiſt our poor, to bury our dead, or to preach to the brethren; theſe offices are all of too tender a nature, for us ever to entruſt them to others. But how is it poſſible for you, ſays I, with ſome warmth, to know whether your diſcourſe is really inſpired by the Almighty? Whoſoever, ſays he, ſhall implore *Chriſt* to enlighten him, and ſhall publiſh the Goſpel truths, he may feel inwardly, ſuch an one may be aſſured, that he is inſpired by the Lord. He then poured forth a numberleſs multitude of Scripture-texts, which proved, as he imagined,

gined, that there is no ſuch thing as Chriſtianity without an immediate revelation, and added theſe remarkable words: When thou moveſt one of thy limbs, is it moved by thy own power? Certainly not, for this limb is often ſenſible to involuntary motions; conſequently he who created thy body, gives motion to this earthly tabernacle. And are the ſeveral ideas of which thy ſoul receives the impreſſion formed by thy ſelf? Much leſs are they, ſince theſe pour in upon thy mind whether thou wilt or no; conſequently thou receiveſt thy ideas from him who created thy ſoul: But as he leaves thy affections at full liberty, he gives thy mind ſuch ideas as thy affections may deſerve; if thou liveſt in God, thou acteſt, thou thinkeſt in God. After this thou needeſt only but open thine eyes to that light which enlightens all mankind, and it is then thou wilt perceive the truth, and make others perceive it. Why this, ſays I, is *Malbranche*'s doctrine to a tittle. I am acquainted with thy *Malbranche*, ſays he; he had ſomething of the *friend* in him, but was not enough ſo. Theſe are the moſt conſiderable particulars I learnt concerning the doctrine of the Quakers; in my next letter I ſhall acquaint

you

quaint you with their hiſtory, which you will find more ſingular than their Opinion.

LETTER III.

ON THE

QUAKERS.

YOU have already heard, that the Quakers date from *Chriſt*, who according to them was the firſt Quaker. Religion, ſay theſe, was corrupted, a little after his Death, and remained in that ſtate of corruption about 1600 Years. But there were always a few Quakers. concealed in the World, who carefully preſerved the ſacred fire, which was extinguiſhed in all but themſelves, until at laſt this light ſpread it ſelf in *England* in 1642.

It was at the time when *Great-Britain* was torn to pieces by the inteſtine wars, which three or four ſects had raiſed in the name of God; that one *George Fox*, born in *Leiceſterſhire*, and ſon to a ſilk-weaver, took it into his head to preach; and, as he pretended, with all the requiſites

ſites of a true apoſtle, that is, without being able either to read or write. He was about twenty five * years of age, irreproachable in his life and conduct, and a holy mad-man. He was equiped in leather from head to foot, and travelled from one village to another, exclaiming againſt war and the clergy. Had his invectives been levelled againſt the ſoldiery only, he would have been ſafe enough, but he inveighed againſt eccleſiaſticks. *Fox* was ſeized at *Derby*, and being carried before a juſtice of peace; he did not once offer to pull off his leathern hat; upon which an Officer gave him a great box on the ear, and cried to him, Do not you know you are to appear uncovered before his worſhip? *Fox* preſented his other cheek to the Officer, and begged him to give him another box for God's ſake. The juſtice would have had him ſworn before he asked him any queſtions: Know, friend, ſays *Fox* to him, that I never ſwear. The juſtice obſerving he *Thee'd* and *Thou'd* him, ſent him to the houſe of correction in *Derby*, with orders that he ſhould be whipped there. *Fox* praiſed the Lord all the way he went to

* *Fox* could not read at that age.

to the houſe of correction, where the juſtice's order was executed with the utmoſt ſeverity. The men who whipped this enthuſiaſt, were greatly ſurprized to hear him beſeech them to give him a few more laſhes for the good of his ſoul. There was no need of intreating theſe people; the laſhes were repeated, for which *Fox* thanked them very cordially, and began to preach. At firſt the ſpectators fell a laughing, but they afterwards liſtened to him; and as enthuſiaſm is an epidemical diſtemper, many were perſuaded, and thoſe who ſcourged him became his firſt diſciples. Being ſet at liberty, he ran up and down the country with a dozen Proſelites at his heels, ſtill declaiming againſt the clergy, and was whipped from time to time. Being one day ſet in the pillory, he harangued the crowd in ſo ſtrong and moving a manner, that fifty of the auditors became his converts; and he won the reſt ſo much in his favour, that his head being freed tumultuouſly from the hole where it was faſtned, the populace went and ſearched for the church of *England* clergyman, who had been chiefly inſtrumental in bringing him to this puniſhment, and ſet him on the ſame pillory, where *Fox* had ſtood,

Fox

Fox was bold enough to convert ſome of *Oliver Cromwell's* Soldiers, who thereupon quitted the ſervice and refuſed to take the oaths *Oliver* having as great a contempt for a ſect which would not allow its members to fight, as *Sixtus Quintus* had for another ſect, *Dove non ſi chiavava*, began to perſecute theſe new converts. The Priſons were crouded with them, but perſecution ſeldom hath any other effect than to increaſe the number of proſelytes. Theſe came therefore from their confinement, more ſtrongly confirmed in the principles they had imbibed, and followed by their goalers whom they had brought over to their belief. But the circumſtances which contributed chiefly to the ſpreading of this ſect were as follows. *Fox* thought himſelf inſpired, and conſequently was of opinion, that he muſt ſpeak in a manner different from the reſt of mankind. He thereupon began to writhe his body, to ſcrew up his face, to hold in his breath, and to exhale it in a forcible manner, inſomuch that the prieſteſs of the *Pythian* God at *Delphos* could not have acted her part to better advantage. Inſpiration ſoon became ſo habitual to him, that he could ſcarce deliver himſelf in any other manner. This was

the firſt gift he communicated to his diſciples. Theſe aped very ſincerely their maſter's ſeveral grimaces, and ſhook in every limb the inſtant the fit of inſpiration came upon them, whence they were called Quakers. The vulgar attempted to mimick them, they trembled, they ſpake thro' the noſe; they quaked and fancied themſelves inſpired by the Holy Ghoſt. The only thing now wanting was a few miracles, and accordingly they wrought ſome.

FOX, this modern patriarch, ſpoke thus to a juſtice of peace before a large aſſembly of people. Friend, take care what thou doeſt: God will ſoon puniſh thee for perſecuting his ſaints. This magiſtrate being one who beſotted himſelf every day with bad beer and brandy, died of an apoplexy two days after, the moment he had ſigned a *mittimus* for impriſoning ſome Quakers. The ſudden death with which this juſtice was ſeized, was not aſcribed to his intemperance, but was univerſally looked upon as the effect of the holy man's predictions; ſo that this accident made more converts to Quakeriſm, than a thouſand ſermons and as many ſhaking fits could have done. *Oliver* finding them increaſe daily was deſirous

ſirous of bringing them over to his party; and for that purpoſe attempted to bribe them by money. However, they were incorruptible, which made him one day declare, that this religion was the only one he had ever met with, that had reſiſted the charms of gold.

The Quakers were ſeveral times perſecuted under *Charles* the ſecond, not upon a religious account, but for refuſing to pay the tythes; for *Thee-ing* and *Thou-ing* the magiſtrates, and for refuſing to take the oaths enacted by the laws.

At laſt *Robert Barclay*, a native of *Scotland*, preſented to the King in 1675, his apology for the Quakers, a work as well drawn up as the ſubject could poſſibly admit. The dedication to *Charles* the ſecond is not filled with mean, flattering encomiums; but abounds with bold touches in favour of truth, and with the wiſeſt counſels. *Thou haſt taſted*, ſays he to the king at the cloſe of his epiſtle dedicatory, *of proſperity and adverſity; thou knoweſt what it is to be baniſhed thy native country; to be over ruled as well as to rule, and ſit upon the throne; and being oppreſſed, thou haſt reaſon to know how hateful the oppreſſor is both to*

God and man: If after all these warnings and Advertisements, thou dost not turn unto the Lord with all thy heart; but forget him who remembred thee in thy distress, and give up thy self to follow lust and vanity, surely great will be thy condemnation.

Against which snare, as well as the temptations of those, that may or do feed thee, and prompt thee to evil, the most excellent and prevalent remedy will be, to apply thy self to that light of Christ, *which shineth in thy conscience, which neither can or will flatter thee, nor suffer thee to be at ease in thy sins; but doth and will deal plainly and faithfully with thee, as those that are followers thereof have plainly done* ——— Thy faithful Friend and subject,

Robert Barclay.

A more surprizing circumstance is, that this epistle, written by a private man of no figure, was so happy in its effects as to put a stop to the persecution.

LETTER

LETTER IV.

ON THE

QUAKERS.

ABOUT this * time aroſe the illuſtrious *William Pen*, who eſtabliſhed the power of the Quakers in *America*, and would have made them appear venerable in the eyes of the *Europeans*, were it poſſible for mankind to reſpect virtue, when revealed in a ridiculous light. He was the only ſon of vice-admiral *Pen*, favourite to the duke of *York*, afterwards king *James* the ſecond.

William Pen at twenty years of age happening to meet with † a Quaker in *Cork*, whom he had known at *Oxford*, this man made a proſelyte of him; and *William* being a ſprightly youth, and naturally eloquent, having a winning aſpect, and a very engaging carriage, he ſoon gained over ſome of his Intimates. He carried matters ſo far, that he formed by

* 1666 † *Thomas Loe.*

by inſenſible degrees a ſociety of young Quakers who met at his Houſe; ſo that he was at the head of a ſect when a little above twenty.

Being returned, after his leaving *Cork*, to the vice-Admiral his father, inſtead of falling upon his knees to ask his bleſſing, he went up to him with his hat on, and ſaid, Friend, I am very glad to ſee thee in good health. The vice-admiral imagined his ſon to be crazy; but ſoon finding he was turned Quaker, he employed all the methods that prudence could ſuggeſt, to engage him to behave and act like other people. The youth made no other anſwer to his father, than by exhorting him to turn Quaker alſo. At laſt his father confined himſelf to this ſingle requeſt, *viz.* that he ſhould wait upon the king and the duke of *York* with his hat under his arm, and ſhould not *Thee* and *Thou* them. *William* anſwered, that he could not do theſe things for conſcience ſake, which exaſperated his father to ſuch a degree that he turned him out of doors. Young *Penn* gave God thanks, for permitting him to ſuffer ſo early in his cauſe; after which he went into the city, where he held forth * and made a great number of converts. The

* About 1668, and the 24th year of his age.

The church of *England* clergy found their congregations dwindle away daily; and *Penn* being young, handſome, and of a graceful ſtature, the court as well as the city ladies flocked very devoutly to his meeting. The patriarch *George Fox* hearing of his great reputation, came to *London*, (although the journey was very long) purely to ſee and converſe with him. Both reſolved to go upon Miſſions into foreign countries, and accordingly they embarked for *Holland*, after having left labourers ſufficient to take care of the *London* vineyard.

Their labours were crowned with ſucceſs in *Amſterdam*; but a circumſtance which reflected the greateſt honour on them, and at the ſame time put their humility to the greateſt trial, was the reception they met with from *Elizabeth* the princeſs *Palatine*, Aunt to *George* the firſt of *Great-Britain*, a lady conſpicuous for her genius and knowledge, and to whom *Des Cartes* had dedicated his *Philoſophical Romance*.

She was then retired to the *Hague*, where ſhe received theſe *friends*, for ſo the Quakers were at that time called in *Holland*. The princeſs had ſeveral conferences with them in her palace, and ſhe

ſhe at laſt entertained ſo favourable an opinion of Quakeriſm, that they confeſſed ſhe was not far from the kingdom of heaven. The friends ſowed likewiſe the good ſeed in *Germany*, but reaped very little fruit; for the mode of *Thee-ing* and *Thou-ing* was not approved of in a country, where a man is perpetually obliged to employ the titles of highneſs and excellency. *William Pen* returned ſoon to *England* upon hearing of his father's ſickneſs, in order to ſee him before he died. The vice-admiral was reconciled to his ſon, and although of a different perſuaſion, embraced him tenderly. *William* made a fruitleſs exhortation to his father not to receive the ſacrament, but to die a Quaker; and the good old man intreated his ſon *William* to wear buttons on his ſleeves, and a crape hatband in his beaver, but all to no purpoſe.

William Pen inherited very large poſſeſſions, part of which conſiſted in crown-debts due to the vice-admiral for ſums he had advanced for the ſea-ſervice. No monies were at that time more ſecure than thoſe owing from the king. *Pen* was obliged to go more than once, and *Thee* and *Thou* king *Charles* and his mini-

miniſters, in order to recover the debt; and at laſt inſtead of ſpecie, the government inveſted him with the right and ſovereignty of a province of *America*, to the ſouth of *Maryland*. Thus was a Quaker raiſed to ſovereign power. *Pen* ſet ſail for his new dominions with two ſhips freighted with Quakers, who followed his fortune. The country was then called *Penſilvania* from *William Pen*, who there founded *Philadelphia*, now the moſt flouriſhing city in that country. The firſt ſtep he took was to enter into an alliance with his *American* neighbours; and this is the only treaty between thoſe people and the Chriſtians that was not ratified by an oath, and was never infringed. The new ſovereign was at the ſame time the legiſlator of *Penſilvania*, and enacted very wiſe and prudent laws, none of which have ever been changed ſince his time. The firſt is, to injure no perſon upon a religious account, and to conſider as brethren all thoſe who believe in one God.

He had no ſooner ſettled his Government, but ſeveral *American* merchants came and peopled this colony. The natives of the country inſtead of flying into the woods, cultivated by inſenſible

degrees a friendſhip with the peaceable Quakers. They loved theſe foreigners as much as they deteſted the other Chriſtians who had conquered and laid waſte *America*. In a little time, a great number of theſe ſavages (falſely ſo called) charmed with the mild and gentle diſpoſition of their neighbours, came in crowds to *William Pen*, and beſought him to admit them into the number of his vaſſals. It was very rare and uncommon for a ſovereign to be *Thee'd* and *Thou'd* by the meaneſt of his ſubjects, who never took their hats off when they came into his preſence; and as ſingular for a Government to be without one prieſt, lawyer or ſoldier, in it, and for a People to be without arms, either offenſive or defenſive; for a body of Citizens to be abſolutely undiſtinguiſhed but by the publick employments, and for neighbours not to entertain the leaſt jealouſy one againſt the other.

William Pen might glory in having brought down upon earth the ſo much boaſted golden age, which in all probability never exiſted but in *Penſilvania*. He returned to *England* to ſettle ſome affairs relating to his new dominions. After the death of king *Charles* the ſecond,

king

king *James*, who had loved the father, indulged the ſame affection to the ſon, and no longer conſidered him an obſcure Sectary, but as a very great man. The king's politicks on this occaſion agreed with his inclinations. He was deſirous of pleaſing the Quakers, by annulling the laws made againſt Nonconformiſts, in order to have an opportunity, by this univerſal toleration, of eſtabliſhing the *Romiſh* religion. All the ſectariſts in *England* ſaw the ſnare that was laid for them, but did not give into it; they never failing to unite when the *Romiſh* religion, their common enemy, is to be oppoſed. But *Penn* did not think himſelf bound in any manner to renounce his principles, merely to favour Proteſtants, to whom he was odious, in oppoſition to a king who loved him. He had eſtabliſhed an univerſal toleration with regard to conſcience in *America*, and would not have it thought that he intended to deſtroy it in *Europe*; for which reaſon he adhered ſo inviolable to king *James*, that a report prevailed univerſally of his being a Jeſuit. This calumny affected him very ſtrongly, and he was obliged to juſtify himſelf in print. However, the unfortunate king *James* the ſecond, in whom, as in moſt princes

princes of the *Stuart* family, grandeur and weakneſs were equally blended; and who, like them, as much overdid ſome things as he was ſhort in others, loſt his kingdom in a manner that is hardly to be accounted for.

All the *Engliſh* ſectariſts accepted from *William* the third and his parliament, the toleration and indulgence which they had refuſed when offered by king *James*. It was then the Quakers began to enjoy, by virtue of the laws, the ſeveral privileges they poſſeſs at this time. *Penn* having at laſt ſeen Quakeriſm firmly eſtabliſhed in his native country, went back to *Penſilvania*. His own people and the *Americans* received him with tears of joy, as though he had been a father who was returned to viſit his children. All the laws had been religiouſly obſerved in his abſence, a circumſtance in which no legiſlator had ever been happy but himſelf. After having reſided ſome years in *Penſilvania*, he left it, but with great reluctance, in order to return to *England*, there to ſolicit ſome matters in favour of the commerce of *Penſilvania*. But he never ſaw it again, he dying at *Roſconmb* in *Berkſhire*, *Anno* 1718.

I am not able to gueſs what fate Quakeriſm may have in *America*, but I perceive it dwindles away daily in *England*. In all countries where liberty of conſcience is allowed, the eſtabliſhed religion will at laſt ſwallow up all the reſt. Quakers are diſqualified from being members of parliament; nor can they enjoy any poſt or preferment becauſe an oath muſt always be taken on theſe occaſions, and they never ſwear. They are therefore reduced to the neceſſity of ſubſiſting upon traffick. Their children, whom the induſtry of their parents hath enriched, are deſirous of enjoying honours, of wearing buttons and ruffles; and quite aſhamed of being called Quakers, they become converts to the Church of *England*, merely to be in the faſhion.

LET-

LETTER V.

ON THE CHURCH OF *ENGLAND.*

ENGLAND is properly the country of ſectariſts. *Multa ſunt manſiones in domo patris mei* (in my father's houſe are many manſions.) An *Engliſhman*, as one to whom liberty is natural, may go to heaven his own way.

Nevertheleſs, altho' every one is permitted to ſerve God in whatever mode or faſhion he thinks proper, yet their true religion, that in which a man makes his fortune, is the ſect of Epiſcopalians or Churchmen, called the Church of *England*, or ſimply the Church, by way of emi-

eminence. No perſon can poſſeſs an employment either in *England* or *Ireland*, unleſs he be ranked among the faithful, that is, profeſſeth himſelf a member of the Church of *England*. This reaſon (which carries mathematical evidence with it) hath converted ſuch numbers of diſſenters of all perſuaſions, that not a twentieth part of the nation is out of the pale of the eſtabliſhed Church. The *Engliſh* clergy have retained a great number of the Romiſh ceremonies, and eſpecially that of receiving, with a moſt ſcrupulous attention, their tithes. They alſo have the pious ambition to aim at ſuperiority.

Moreover, they inſpire very religiouſly their flocks with a holy zeal againſt Diſſenters of all denominations. This zeal was pretty violent under the Tories, in the four laſt years of queen *Anne*; but was productive of no greater miſchief than the breaking the windows of ſome meeting-houſes, and the demoliſhing of a few of them. For the religious rage ceaſed in *England* with the civil wars; and was no more under queen *Anne*, then the hollow noiſe of a ſea whoſe billows ſtill heaved, although ſo long after the ſtorm, when the Whigs and Tories laid waſte their native country, in the ſame manner as the

Guelphs

Guelphs and Gibelins formerly did theirs. It was abſolutely neceſſary for both parties to call in religion on this occaſion; the Tories declared for epiſcopacy, and the Whigs, as ſome imagined, were for aboliſhing it; however, after theſe had got the upper hand, they contented themſelves with only abridging its power.

At the time when the earl of *Oxford* and the lord *Bolingbroke* uſed to drink healths to the Tories, the Church of *England* conſidered thoſe noblemen as the defenders of its holy privileges. The lower houſe of Convocation (a kind of houſe of Commons) compoſed wholly of the clergy, was in ſome credit at that time; at leaſt the members of it had the liberty to meet, to diſpute on eccleſiaſtical matters, to ſentence impious books from time to time, to the flames; that is, books written againſt themſelves. The miniſtry, which is now compoſed of Whigs, doth not ſo much as allow thoſe gentlemen to aſſemble, ſo that they are at this time reduced (in the obſcurity of their reſpective pariſhes) to the melancholy occupation of praying for the proſperity of the Government, whoſe tranquility thier enemies ſay, theywould willingly diſturb. With regard to the biſhops, who are

twenty

twenty ſix in all, they ſtill have ſeats in the houſe of lords in ſpite of the Whigs, becauſe the ancient abuſe of conſidering them as Barons ſubſiſts to this day. There is a clauſe however in the oath which the government requires from theſe gentlemen, that puts their chriſtian patience to a very great trial, *viz.* that they ſhall be of the Church of *England* as by law eſtabliſhed. There are few biſhops, deans, or other dignitaries, but imagine they are ſo *jure divino*; it is conſequently a great mortification to them to be obliged to confeſs, that they owe their dignity to a pitiful law enacted by a ſet of profane laymen. A learned monk (father *Courayer*) writ a book lately to prove the validity and ſucceſſion of *Engliſh* ordinations. This book was forbid in *France*; but do you believe that the *Engliſh* miniſtry were pleaſed with it? Far from it. Theſe damned Whigs do not value a ſtraw, whether the epiſcopal ſucceſſion among them hath been interrupted or not, or whether biſhop *Parker* was conſecrated (as it is pretended) in a tavern, or a Church; for theſe Whigs are much better pleaſed that the biſhops ſhould derive their authority from the parliament, than from the apoſtles. The lord *B* ——— obſerved, that this notion

of divine right would only make ſo many tyrants in lawn-ſleeves, but that the laws made ſo many citizens.

With regard to the morals of the *Engliſh* clergy, they are more regular than thoſe of *France*, and for this reaſon. All the clergy (a very few excepted) are educated in the univerſities of *Oxford* or *Cambridge*, far from the depravity and corruption which reign in the capital. They are not called to dignities till very late, at an age when men are ſenſible of no other paſſion but avarice; that is, when their ambition craves a ſupply. Employments are here beſtowed both in the church and the army, as a reward for long ſervices; and we never ſee youngſters made biſhops or colonels immediately upon their laying aſide the academical gown; and beſides, moſt of the clergy are married. The ſtiff and awkward air contracted by them at the univerſity, and the little familiarity the men of this country have with the ladies, commonly oblige a biſhop to confine himſelf to, and reſt contented with his own. Clergymen ſometimes take a glaſs at the tavern, cuſtom giving them a ſanction on this occaſion; and if they fuddle themſelves it is in a very ſerious manner, and without giving the leaſt ſcandal.

That

That mixed being (not to be defined) who is neither of the clergy nor of the laity; in a word, the thing called *Abbé* in *France*, is a ſpecies quite unknown in *England*. All the clergy here are very much upon the reſerve, and ſome of them pedants. When theſe are told, that in *France*, young fellows famous for their diſſoluteneſs and raiſed to the higheſt dignities of the church by female intrigues, addreſs the fair publickly in an amorous way, amuſe themſelves in writing tender love-ſongs, entertain their friends very ſplendidly every night at their own houſes, and after the banquet is ended, withdraw to invoke the aſſiſtance of the Holy Ghoſt, and call themſelves boldly the ſucceſſors of the apoſtles, they bleſs God for their being Proteſtants. But, theſe are ſhameleſs Hereticks, who deſerve to be blown hence through the flames to old Nick, as *Rabelais* ſays, and for this reaſon, I do not trouble my ſelf about them.

LETTER VI.

ON THE

PRESBYTERIANS.

THE Church of *England* is confined almoſt to the kingdom whence it received its name, and to *Ireland*, for Presbyterianiſm is the eſtabliſhed religion in *Scotland*. This Presbyterianiſm is directly the ſame with Calviniſm, as it was eſtabliſhed in *France*, and is now profeſſed at *Geneva*. As the prieſts of this ſect receive but very inconſiderable ſtipends from their churches, and conſequently cannot emulate the ſplendid luxury of biſhops, they exclaim very naturally againſt honours which they can never attain to. Figure to your ſelf the haughty *Diogenes*, trampling under foot the pride of *Plato*. The *Scotch* Presbyterians arenot very unlike that proud, although tattered reaſoner. *Diogenes* did not uſe

Alex-

Alexander half ſo impertinently as theſe treated king *Charles* the ſecond; for when they took up arms in his cauſe, in oppoſition to *Oliver*, who had deceived them, they forced that poor monarch to undergo the hearing of three or four ſermons every day; would not ſuffer him to play, reduced him to a ſtate of penitence and mortification; ſo that *Charles* ſoon grew ſick of theſe pedants, and accordingly eloped from them with as much joy as a youth does from ſchool.

A Church of *England* miniſter appears as another *Cato* in preſence of a juvenile, ſprightly *French* graduate, who bawls for a whole morning together in the divinity ſchools, and hums a ſong in chorus with ladies in the Evening. But this *Cato* is a very ſpark, when before a *Scotch* Presbyterian. The latter affects a ſerious gait, puts on a ſour look, wears a huge broad-brimmed hat, and a long cloak over a very ſhort coat; preaches through the noſe, and gives the name of the whore of *Babylon* to all churches, where the miniſters are ſo fortunate as to enjoy an annual revenue of five or ſix thouſand pounds; and where the people are weak enough to ſuffer this, and to give them

the

the titles of my lord, your lordſhip, or your eminence.

Theſe gentlemen, who have alſo ſome churches in *England*, introduced there the mode of grave and ſevere exhortations. To them is owing the ſanctification of *Sunday* in the three kingdoms. People are there forbid to work or take any recreation on that day, in which the ſeverity is twice as great as that of the *Romiſh* church. No opera's, plays or concerts are allowed in *London* on *Sundays*; and even cards are ſo expreſsly forbid, that none but perſons of quality and thoſe we call the genteel, play on that day; the reſt of the nation go either to church, to the tavern, or to ſee their miſtreſſes.

Although the Epiſcopal and Presbyterian ſects are the two prevailing ones in *Great-Britain*, yet all others are very welcome to come and ſettle in it, and live very ſociably together, although moſt of their preachers hate one another, almoſt as cordially as a Janſeniſt damns a Jeſuit.

Take a view of the *Royal Exchange* in *London*, a place more venerable than many courts of juſtice, where the repreſentatives of all nations meet for the benefit of mankind. There the Jews, the Maho-

Mahometan, and the Chriſtian tranſact together as though they all profeſſed the ſame religion, and give the name of Infidel to none but bankrupts. There the Presbyterian confides in the Anabaptiſt, and the Churchman depends on the Quaker's word. At the breaking up of this pacific and free aſſembly, ſome withdraw to the ſynagogue, and others to take a glaſs. This man goes and is baptized in a great tub, in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt: That man hath his ſon's foreskin cut off, whilſt a ſet of *Hebrew* words (quite unintelligible to him) are mumbled over his child. Others retire to their churches, and there wait for the inſpiration of heaven with their hats on, and all are ſatisfied.

If one religion only were allowed in *England*, the government would very poſſibly become arbitrary; if there were but two, the people would cut one another's throats; but as there are ſuch a multitude, they all live happy and in peace.

LET-

LETTER VII.

ON THE

SOCINIANS,

OR

ARIANS,

OR

ANTITRINITARIANS.

THERE is a little ſect here compoſed of clergymen, and of a few very learned perſons among the laity, who, though they do not call themſelves *Arians* or *Socinians*, do yet diſſent entirely from St. *Athanaſius*, with regard to their notions of the Trinity, and declare very frankly, that the Father is greater than the Son.

Do

Do you remember what is related of a certain orthodox biſhop, who, in order to convince an emperor of the reality of conſubſtantiation, put his hand under the chin of the monarch's ſon, and took him by the noſe in preſence of his ſacred majeſty? The emperor was going to order his attendants to throw the biſhop out of the window, when the good old man gave him this convincing reaſon: Since your Majeſty, ſays he, is angry when your ſon hath not due reſpect ſhown him, what puniſhment do you think will God the father inflict on thoſe who refuſe his ſon *Jeſus* the titles due to him? The perſons I juſt now mentioned, declare that the holy biſhop took a very wrong ſtep; that his argument was inconcluſive, and that the emperor ſhould have anſwered him thus: Know that there are two ways by which men may be wanting in reſpect to me; firſt, in not doing honour ſufficient to my ſon; and ſecondly, in paying him the ſame honour as to me.

Be this as it will, the principles of *Arius* begin to revive, not only in *England* but in *Holland* and *Poland*. The celebrated Sir *Iſaac Newton* honoured this opinion ſo far as to countenance it. This philoſopher thought, that the Unitarians argued

argued more mathematically than we do. But the moſt ſanguine ſtickler for Arianiſm is the illuſtrious Dr. *Clark*. This man is rigidly virtuous, and of a mild diſpoſition; is more fond of his tenets than deſirous of propagating them; and abſorbed ſo entirely in problems and calculations, that he is a mere reaſoning machine.

It is he who wrote a book which is much eſteemed and little underſtood, on the exiſtence of God; and another more intelligible, but pretty much contemned, on the truth of the Chriſtian religion.

He never engaged in ſcholaſtic diſputes, which our friend calls venerable trifles. He only publiſhed a work containing all the teſtimonies of the primitive ages, for and againſt the Unitarians, and leaves to the reader the counting of the voices, and the liberty of forming a judgment. This book won the doctor a great number of partizans, and loſt him the See of *Canterbury*: But in my humble opinion, he was out in his calculation, and had better have been Primate of all *England*, than merely an *Arian* parſon.

You ſee that opinions are ſubject to revolutions as well as Empires. *Arianiſm* after having triumphed during three centuries,

turies, and been forgot twelve, riſeth at laſt out of its own aſhes; but it hath choſe a very improper ſeaſon to make its appearance in, the preſent age being quite cloyed with Diſputes and Sects. The members of this Sect are, beſides, too few to be indulged the liberty of holding public aſſemblies, which however they will doubtleſs be permitted to do, in caſe they ſpread conſiderably. But people are now ſo very cold with reſpect to all things of this kind, that there is little probability any new religion, or old one that may be revived, will meet with favour. Is it not whimſical enough that *Luther*, *Calvin* and *Zuinglius*, all of them wretched authors, ſhould have founded Sects which are now ſpread over a great part of *Europe*; that *Mahomet*, although ſo ignorant, ſhould have given a religion to *Aſia* and *Africa*; and that Sir *Iſaac Newton*, Dr. *Clark*, Mr. *Locke*, Mr. *Le Clerc*, *&c.* the greateſt philoſophers, as well as the ableſt writers of their ages, ſhould ſcarce have been able to raiſe a little flock, which even decreaſeth daily.

This it is to be born at a proper period of time. Were Cardinal *de Retz* to return again into the world, neither his eloquence

eloquence nor his intrigues would draw together ten women in *Paris*.

Were *Oliver Cromwell*, he who beheaded his Sovereign and ſeized upon the kingly dignity, to riſe from the dead; he would be a wealthy city trader, and no more.

LETTER. VIII.

ON THE

PARLIAMENT.

THE Members of the *Engliſh* Parliament are fond of comparing themſelves to the old *Romans*.

Not long ſince, Mr. *Shippen* opened a ſpeech in the houſe of Commons with theſe words, *The Majeſty of the People of* England *would be wounded*. The ſingularity of the expreſſion occaſioned a loud laugh; but this Gentleman, ſo far from being diſconcerted, repeated the ſame words with a reſolute tone of voice, and the

the laugh ceaſed. In my opinion, the Majeſty of the people of *England* hath nothing in common with that of the people of *Rome*; much leſs is there any affinity between their governments. There is in *London* a Senate, ſome of the members whereof are accuſed, (doubtleſs very unjuſtly) of ſelling their voices on certain occaſions, as was done in *Rome*; this is the only reſemblance. Beſides, the two nations appear to me quite oppoſite in character, with regard both to good and evil. The *Romans* never knew the dreadful folly of religious Wars, an abomination reſerved for devout Preachers of patience and humility. *Marius* and *Sylla*, *Cæſar* and *Pompey*, *Anthony* and *Auguſtus*, did not draw their ſwords and ſet the world in a blaze, merely to determine whether the *Flamen* ſhould wear his ſhirt over his robe, or his robe over his ſhirt; or whether the ſacred Chickens ſhould eat and drink, or eat only, in order to take the augury. The *Engliſh* have hanged one another by law, and cut one another to pieces in pitcht battles, for quarrels of as trifling a nature. The Sects of the Epiſcopalians and Presbyterians quite diſtracted theſe very ſerious Heads for a time. But I fancy they will hardly ever be ſo filly again,

again, they ſeeming to be grown wiſer at their own expence; and I do not perceive the leaſt inclination in them to murther one another merely about ſyllogiſms, as ſome Zealots among them once did.

But here follows a more eſſential difference between *Rome* and *England*, which gives the advantage entirely to the latter, *viz.* that the civil wars of *Rome* ended in ſlavery, and thoſe of the *Engliſh* in liberty. The *Engliſh* are the only people upon earth who have been able to preſcribe limits to the power of Kings by reſiſting them; and who, by a ſeries of ſtruggles, have at laſt eſtabliſhed that wiſe Government, where the Prince is all-powerful to do good, and at the ſame time is reſtrained from committing evil; where the Nobles are great without inſolence, although there are no Vaſſals; and where the people ſhare in the government without confuſion.

The houſe of Lords and that of the Commons divide the legiſlative power under the King, but the *Romans* had no ſuch ballance. The Patricians and Plebeians in *Rome* were perpetually at variance, and there was no intermediate Power to reconcile them. The *Roman* Senate who were ſo unjuſtly, ſo criminally

nally proud, as not to ſuffer the Plebeians to ſhare with them in any thing, could find no other artifice to keep the latter out of the Adminiſtration than by employing them in foreign wars. They conſidered the Plebeians as a wild beaſt, whom it behoved them to let looſe upon their neighbours, for fear they ſhould devour their maſters. Thus the greateſt defect in the Government of the *Romans* raiſed them to be Conquerors. By being unhappy at home, they triumphed over, and poſſeſſed themſelves of the world, till at laſt their diviſions ſunk them to Slavery.

The government of *England* will never riſe to ſo exalted a pitch of glory, nor will its end be ſo fatal. The *Engliſh* are not fired with the ſplendid folly of making conqueſts, but would only prevent their neighbours from conquering. They are not only jealous of their own Liberty, but even of that of other Nations. The *Engliſh* were exaſperated againſt *Lewis* the Fourteenth, for no other reaſon but becauſe he was ambitious; and declared war againſt him merely out of levity, not from any intereſted motives.

The *Engliſh* have doubtleſs purchaſed their Liberties at a very high price, and waded

waded through ſeas of blood to drown the Idol of arbitrary Power. Other nations have been involved in as great calamities, and have ſhed as much blood; but then the blood they ſpilt in defence of their liberties, only enſlaved them the more.

That which riſeth to a Revolution in *England* is no more than a Sedition in other countries. A city in *Spain*, in *Barbary*, or in *Turkey*, takes up arms in defence of its Privileges, when immediately it is ſtormed by mercenary Troops, it is puniſhed by Executioners, and the reſt of the Nation kiſs the chains they are loaded with. The *French* are of opinion, that the Government of this Iſland is more tempeſtuous than the ſea which ſurrounds it, which indeed is true; but then it is never ſo, but when the King raiſes the ſtorm; when he attempts to ſeize the Ship of which he is only the chief Pilot. The civil wars of *France* laſted longer; were more cruel, and productive of greater evils than thoſe of *England*. But none of theſe civil Wars had a wiſe and prudent liberty for their object.

In the deteſtable Reigns of *Charles* the ninth, and *Henry* the third, the whole affair was only, whether the people ſhould be ſlaves to the *Guiſes*. With regard to the

the laſt war of *Paris*, it deſerves only to be hooted at. Methinks I ſee a croud of School-boys riſing up in arms againſt their Maſter, and afterwards whipped for it. Cardinal *de Retz*, who was witty and brave, but to no purpoſe; rebellious without a cauſe; factious without deſign, and head of a defenceleſs Party, caballed for caballing ſake, and ſeemed to foment the civil War merely out of diverſion. The Parliament did not know what he intended, nor what he did not intend. He levied troops by act of Parliament, and the next moment caſhiered them. He threatned, he begged pardon; he ſet a price upon Cardinal *Mazarine*'s head, and afterwards congratulated him in a public manner. Our civil wars under *Charles* the ſixth were bloody and cruel, thoſe of the *League* execrable, and that of the * *Frondeurs* ridiculous.

That for which the *French* chiefly reproach the *Engliſh* nation, is, the murther of

* *Frondeurs*, in its proper ſenſe *Slingers*, and figuratively *Gavilliers*, or lovers of contradiction, was a name given to a league or party that oppoſed the *French* miniſtry, *i. e.* Cardinal *Mazarine* in 1648. See *Rochefaucault's* Memoirs.

of King *Charles* the Firſt, whom his ſubjects treated exactly as he would have treated them, had his Reign been proſperous. After all, conſider on one ſide, *Charles* the firſt defeated in a pitched battle, impriſoned, tryed, ſentenced to die in *Weſtminſter-hall*, and then beheaded: And on the other, the Emperor *Henry* the ſeventh, poiſoned by his chaplain at his receiving the Sacrament; *Henry* the third ſtabbed by a Monk; thirty aſſaſſinations projected againſt *Henry* the fourth; ſeveral of them put in execution, and the laſt bereaving that great Monarch of his life. Weigh, I ſay, all theſe wicked attempts, and then judge.

LETTER IX.

ON THE

GOVERNMENT.

THAT mixture in the *Engliſh* government, that harmony between King,

King, Lords and Commons, did not always ſubſiſt. *England* was enſlaved for a long ſeries of years by the *Romans*, and *Saxons*, the *Danes* and the *French* ſucceſſively. *William* the conqueror particularly ruled them with a rod of Iron. He diſpoſed as abſolutely of the lives and fortunes of his conquered ſubjects as an eaſtern Monarch; and forbid, upon pain of death, the *Engliſh* both fire or candle in their houſes after eight a clock; whether he did this to prevent their nocturnal meetings, or only to try, by this odd and whimſical prohibition, how far it was poſſible for one Man to extend his power over his fellow Creatures. It is true indeed that the *Engliſh* had Parliaments before and after *William* the Conqueror; and they boaſt of them as though theſe aſſemblies, then called Parliaments, compoſed of eccleſiaſtical Tyrants, and of plunderers entitled Barons, had been the guardians of the publick liberty and happineſs.

The Barbarians who came from the ſhores of the *Baltick*, and ſettled in the reſt of *Europe*, brought with them the form of government called States or Parliaments, about which ſo much noiſe is made, and which are ſo little underſtood.

Kings indeed were not abſolute in thoſe days, but then the people were more wretched upon that very account, and more completely enſlaved. The Chiefs of the ſavages who had laid waſte *France*, *Italy*, *Spain*, and *England*, made themſelves Monarchs. Their generals divided among themſelves the ſeveral countries they had conquered, whence ſprung thoſe Margraves, thoſe Peers, thoſe Barons, thoſe petty Tyrants, who often conteſted with their Sovereigns for the ſpoils of whole nations. Theſe were birds of prey, fighting with an Eagle for Doves, whoſe blood the Victorious was to ſuck. Every nation, inſtead of being governed by one Maſter, was trampled upon by an hundred Tyrants. The prieſts ſoon played a part among them. Before this, it had been the fate of the *Gauls*, the *Germans* and the *Britons*, to be always governed by their Druids, and the Chiefs of their villages, an ancient kind of Barons, not ſo tyrannical as their ſucceſſors. Theſe Druids pretended to be mediators between God and man. They enacted laws, they fulminated their excommunications, and ſentenced to death. The Biſhops ſucceeded, by inſenſible degrees, to their temporal authority in the

Goth

Goth and *Vandal* government. The Popes ſet themſelves at their head, and armed with their Briefs, their Bulls and reinforced by Monks, they made even Kings tremble; depoſed and aſſaſſinated them at pleaſure, and employed every artifice to draw into their own purſes, monies from all parts of *Europe*. The weak *Ina*, one of the tyrants of the *Saxon* Heptarchy in *England*, was the firſt Monarch that ſubmitted, in his pilgrimage to *Rome*, to pay St. *Peter*'s penny (equivalent very near to a *French* crown) for every houſe in his dominions. The whole Iſland ſoon followed his example; *England* became inſenſibly one of the Pope's provinces, and the holy Father uſed to ſend from time to time his Legates thither to levy exorbitant taxes. At laſt King *John* delivered up by a public inſtrument, the Kingdom of *England* to the Pope, who had excommunicated him; but the Barons not finding their account in this reſignation, dethroned the wretched King *John*, and ſeated *Lewis*, father to St. *Lewis* King of *France* in his place. However they were ſoon weary of their new Monarch, and accordingly obliged him to return back to *France*.

Whilſt

Whilſt that the Barons, the Biſhops, and the Popes, all laid waſte *England*, where all were for ruling; the moſt numerous, the moſt uſeful, even the moſt virtuous, and conſequently the moſt venerable part of mankind, conſiſting of thoſe who ſtudy the laws and the ſciences; of traders, of artificers, in a word, of all who were not tyrants; that is, thoſe who are called the people; theſe, I ſay, were by them looked upon as ſo many animals beneath the dignity of the human ſpecies. The Commons in thoſe ages were far from ſharing in the government, they being *Villains* or Peaſants, whoſe labour, whoſe blood, were the property of their Maſters, who entitled themſelves the Nobility. The major part of them in *Europe* were at that time what they are to this day in ſeveral parts of the world; they were *Villains* or Bondſmen of Lords; that is, a kind of cattle bought and ſold with the land. Many ages paſt away before juſtice could be done to human natute; before mankind were conſcious, that it was abominable numbers ſhould ſow, and but few reap: And was not *France* very happy, when the power and authority of thoſe petty Rob-

Robbers was aboliſhed by the lawful authority of Kings and of the People?

Happily in the violent ſhocks which the diviſions between Kings and the Nobles gave to empires, the chains of Nations were more or leſs heavy. Liberty in *England*, ſprung from the quarrels of Tyrants. The Barons forced King *John* and King *Henry* the third, to grant the *Magna Charta*, the chief deſign of which was indeed to make Kings dependant on the Lords, but then the reſt of the nation were a little favoured in it, in order that they might join, on proper occaſions, with their pretended Maſters. This great Charter which is conſidered as the ſacred origin of the *Engliſh* Liberties, ſhews in it ſelf how little Liberty was known.

The Title alone proves, that the King thought he had a juſt right to be abſolute; and that the Barons, and even the Clergy forced him to give up that pretended right, for no other reaſon but becauſe they were the moſt powerful.

Magna Charta begins in this ſtile, *We grant, of our own free will, the following Privileges to the Archbiſhops, Biſhops, Priors and Barons of our Kingdom*, &c.

The

The Houſe of Commons is not once mentioned in the Articles of this Charter, a Proof that it did not yet exiſt, or that it exiſted without Power. Mention is therein made, by name, of the Freemen of *England*, a melancholy Proof that ſome were not ſo. It appears by the thirty ſecond Article, that theſe pretended Freemen owed Service to their Lords. Such a Liberty as this, was not many removes from Slavery.

By Article XXI, the King ordains that his Officers ſhall not henceforward ſeize upon, unleſs they pay for them, the Horſes and Carts of Freemen. The People conſidered this Ordinance as a real Liberty, although it was a greater Tyranny. *Henry* the ſeventh, that happy Uſurper and great Politician, who pretended to love the Barons, although he in reality hated and feared them, got their Lands alienated. By this means the *Villains*, afterwards acquiring Riches by their Induſtry, purchaſed the Eſtates and Country-Seats of the illuſtrious Peers who had ruined themſelves by their Folly and Extravagance, and all the Lands got by inſenſible Degrees into other Hands.

The Power of the Houſe of Commons increaſed every Day. The Families

lies of the ancient Peers were at laſt extinct; and as Peers only are properly noble in *England*, there would be no ſuch thing in ſtrictneſs of Law, as Nobility in that Iſland, had not the Kings created new Barons from Time to Time, and preſerved the Body of Peers, once a Terror to them, to oppoſe them to the Commons, ſince become ſo formidable.

All theſe new Peers who compoſe the higher Houſe, receive nothing but their Titles from the King, and very few of them have Eſtates in thoſe Places whence they take their Titles. One ſhall be Duke of *D* —— although he hath not a Foot of Land in *Dorſetſhire*; and another is Earl of a Village, although he ſcarce knows where it is ſituated. The Peers have Power, but it is only in the Parliament Houſe.

There is no ſuch thing here, as * *haute, moyenne, & baſſe juſtice*, that is a Power to

* *La haute juſtice* is that of a Lord, who has Power to ſentence capitally, and to judge of all Cauſes civil and criminal, thoſe of the Crown excepted. *La moyenne juſtice*, is empowered to judge of Actions relating to Guardianſhips, and Offences. La baſſe *juſtice* takes Cognizance of the Fees due to the Lord, of the Havock of Beaſts, and of Offences. The *moyenne juſtice* is imaginary, and there is perhaps no Inſtance of its ever being put in Execution.

to judge in all Matters civil and criminal; nor a Right or Privilege of Hunting in the Grounds of a Citizen, who at the ſame time is not permitted to fire a Gun in his own Field.

No one is exempted in this Country from paying certain Taxes, becauſe he is a Nobleman or a Prieſt. All Duties and Taxes are ſettled by the Houſe of Commons, whoſe Power is greater than that of the Peers, although inferior to it in dignity. The ſpiritual as well as temporal Lords have the Liberty to reject a Money Bill brought in by the Commons, but they are not allowed to alter any thing in it, and muſt either paſs or throw it out without Reſtriction. When the Bill hath paſſed the Lords, and is ſigned by the King, then the whole Nation pays, every Man in proportion to his Revenue or Eſtate, not according to his Title, which would be abſurd. There is no ſuch thing as an arbitrary Subſidy or Poll-Tax, but a general Tax on the Lands, of all which an Eſtimate was made in the Reign of the famous King *William* the Third.

The Land-Tax continueth ſtill upon the ſame foot, although the Revenue of the Lands is increaſed. Thus no one is ty-

tyrannized over, and every one is eaſy. The feet of the Peaſants are not bruiſed by wooden Shoes; they eat white Bread, are well cloathed, and are not afraid of increaſing their Stock of Cattle, nor of tilling their Houſes, from any Apprehenſions that their Taxes will be raiſed the Year following. The annual Income of the Eſtates of a great many Commoners in *England*, amounts to * two hundred thouſand Livres; and yet theſe do not think it beneath them to plough the Lands which enrich them, and on which they enjoy their Liberty.

LETTER X.

ON

TRADE.

AS Trade enriched the Citizens in *England*, ſo it contributed to their Freedom, and this Freedom on the other Side extended their Commerce; whence aroſe the Grandeur of the State. Trade raiſed

* Ten thouſand Pounds Sterling.

raiſed by inſenſible Degrees the naval Power, which gives the *Engliſh* a Superiority over the Seas; and they now are Maſters of very near two hundred Ships of War. Poſterity will very poſſibly be ſurprized to hear that an Iſland whoſe only Produce is a little Lead, Tin, Fuller's Earth, and coarſe Wool, ſhould become ſo powerful by its Commerce, as to be able to ſend in 1723, three Fleets at the ſame time to three different and far diſtanced Parts of the Globe. One before *Gibraltar*, conquered and ſtill poſſeſſed by the *Engliſh*; a ſecond to *Porto Bello*, to diſpoſſeſs the King of *Spain* of the Treaſures of the *Weſt-Indies*; and a third into the *Baltick*, to prevent the *Northern* Powers from coming to an Engagement.

At the Time when *Lewis* XIV. made all *Italy* tremble, and that his Armies, which had already poſſeſſed themſelves of *Savoy* and *Piedmont*, were upon the Point of taking *Turin*; Prince *Eugene* was obliged to march from the Middle of *Germany* in order to ſuccour *Savoy*. Having no Money, without which, Cities cannot be either taken or defended, he addreſſed himſelf to ſome *Engliſh* Merchants. Theſe, at an Hour and half's Warning,

lent

lent him * 5,000,000 of Livres whereby he was enabled to deliver *Turin*, and to beat the *French*; after which he wrote the following ſhort Letter to the Perſons who had diſburſed him the abovementioned Sums: *Gentlemen, I have received your Money, and flatter my ſelf that I have laid it out to your Satisfaction.* Such a Circumſtance as this raiſeth a juſt Pride in an *Engliſh* Merchant, and makes him preſume (not without ſome Reaſon) to compare himſelf to a *Roman* Citizen; and indeed a Peer's Brother doth not think Traffic beneath him. When the Lord *Townſhend* was Miniſter of State, a Brother of his was content to be a City Merchant; and at the Time that the Earl of *Oxford* governed *Great Britain*, his younger Brother was no more than a Factor in *Aleppo*, where he choſe to live, and where he died. This Cuſtom, which begins however to be laid aſide, appears monſtrous to *Germans*, vainly puffed up with their Extraction. Theſe think it morally impoſſible that the Son of an *Engliſh* Peer ſhould be no more than a rich and powerful Citizen; for all are Princes in *Germany*. There have been thirty Highneſſes of the ſame Name, all whoſe

* 250,000 l. Sterling.

whoſe Patrimony conſiſted only in their Eſcutcheons and their Pride.

In *France* the Title of Marquis is given *gratis* to any one who will accept of it; and whoſoever arrives at *Paris* from the midſt of the moſt remote Provinces with Money in his Purſe, and a Name terminating in *ac* or *ille*, may ſtrut about, and cry, Such a Man as I! A Man of my Rank and Figure! And may look down upon a Trader with ſovereign Contempt; whilſt the Trader on the other Side, by thus often hearing his Profeſſion treated ſo diſdainfully, is Fool enough to bluſh at it. However, I cannot ſay which is moſt uſeful to a Nation; a Lord, powdered in the tip of the Mode, who knows exactly at what of the Clock the King riſes and goes to bed; and who gives himſelf Airs of Grandeur and State, at the ſame Time that he is acting the Slave in the Anti-chamber of a prime Miniſter; or a Merchant, who enriches his Country, diſpatcheth Orders from his Compting Houſe to *Surat* and *Grand Cairo*, and contributes to the Felicity of the World.

LET-

LETTER XI.

ON

INOCULATION.

IT is inadvertently affirmed in the Chriſtian Countries of *Europe*, that the *Engliſh* are Fools and Madmen. Fools, becauſe they give their Children the Small-Pox to prevent their catching it; and Mad-men, becauſe they wantonly communicate a certain and dreadful Diſtemper to their Children, merely to prevent an uncertain Evil. The *Engliſh*, on the other Side, call the reſt of the *Europeans* cowardly, and unnatural. Cowardly, becauſe they are afraid of putting their Children to a little Pain; unnatural, becauſe they expoſe them to die one Time or other of the Small-Pox. But, that the Reader may be able to judge, whether the *Engliſh*, or thoſe who differ from them in opinion,

opinion, are in the right, here follows the Hiſtory of the famed Inoculation, which is mentioned with ſo much Dread in *France*.

The *Circaſſian* Women, have, from Time immemorial, communicated the Small-Pox to their Children when not above ſix Months old, by making an Inciſion in the arm, and by putting into this Inciſion a Puſtle, taken carefully from the Body of another Child. This Puſtle produces the ſame Effect in the arm it is laid in, as Yeſt in a Piece of Dough: It ferments, and diffuſes through the whole Maſs of Blood, the Qualities with which it is impregnated. The Puſtles of the Child, in whom the artificial Small-Pox hath been thus inoculated, are employed to communicate the ſame Diſtemper to others. There is an almoſt perpetual Circulation of it in *Circaſſia*; and when unhappily the Small-Pox hath quite left the Country, the Inhabitants of it are in as great Trouble and Perplexity, as other Nations when their Harveſt hath fallen ſhort.

The Circumſtance that introduced a Cuſtom in *Circaſſia*, which appears ſo ſingular to others, is nevertheleſs a Cauſe common to all Nations, I mean maternal Tenderneſs and Intereſt.

The

The *Circaſſians* are poor, and their Daughters are beautiful, and indeed it is in them they chiefly trade. They furniſh with Beauties the Seraglios of the *Turkiſh* Sultan, of the *Perſian* Sophy, and of all thoſe who are wealthy enough to purchaſe and maintain ſuch precious Merchandize. Theſe Maidens are very honourably and virtuouſly inſtructed to fondle and careſs Men; are taught Dances of a very polite and effeminate kind; and how to heighten by the moſt voluptuous Artifices, the Pleaſures of their diſdainful Maſters for whom they are deſigned. Theſe unhappy Creatures repeat their Leſſon to their Mothers, in the ſame manner as little Girls among us repeat their Catechiſm, without underſtanding one Word they ſay.

Now it often happened, that after a Father and Mother had taken the utmoſt Care of the Education of their Children, they were fruſtrated of all their Hopes in an Inſtant. The Small Pox getting into the Family, one Daughter died of it, another loſt an Eye, a third had a great Noſe at her Recovery, and the unhappy Parents were completely ruined. Even frequently, when the Small-Pox became epidemical, Trade was ſuſpended

for ſeveral Years, which thinned very conſiderably the Seraglios of *Perſia* and *Turkey*.

A trading Nation is always watchful over its own Intereſts, and graſps at every Diſcovery that may be of Advantage to its Commerce. The *Circaſſians* obſerved, that ſcarce one Perſon in a Thouſand was ever attacked by a Small-Pox of a violent kind. That ſome indeed had this Diſtemper very favourably three or four Times, but never twice ſo as to prove fatal; in a Word, that no one ever had it in a violent Degree twice in his Life. They obſerved farther, that when the Small-Pox is of the milder ſort, and the Puſtles have only a tender, delicate Skin to break through, they never leave the leaſt Scar in the Face. From theſe natural Obſervations they concluded, that in caſe an Infant of ſix Months or a Year old, ſhould have a milder ſort of Small-Pox, he would not die of it, would not be marked, nor be ever afflicted with it again.

In order therefore to preſerve the Life and Beauty of their Children, the only Thing remaining was, to give them the Small-Pox in their infant Years. This they did, by inoculating in the Body of

a Child, a Puſtle taken from the moſt regular, and at the ſame Time the moſt favourable ſort of Small-Pox that could be procured.

The Experiment could not poſſibly fail. The *Turks*, who are People of good Senſe, ſoon adopted this Cuſtom, inſomuch that at this Time there is not a Baſſa in *Conſtantinople*, but communicates the Small-Pox to his Children of both Sexes, immediately upon their being weaned.

Some pretend, that the *Circaſſians* borrowed this Cuſtom anciently from the *Arabians*, but we ſhall leave the clearing up of this Point of Hiſtory to ſome learned Benedictine, who will not fail to compile a great many Folio's on this Subject, with the ſeveral Proofs or Authorities. All I have to ſay upon it, is, that in the beginning of the Reign of King *George* the Firſt, the Lady *Wortley Mountague*, a Woman of as fine a Genius, and endued with as great a Strength of Mind, as any of her Sex in the *Britiſh* Kingdoms, being with her Husband who was Ambaſſador at the Port, made no ſcruple to communicate the Small-Pox to an Infant of which ſhe was delivered in *Conſtantinople*. The Chaplain repreſented to his Lady,

but to no purpoſe, that this was an unchriſtian Operation, and therefore that it could ſucceed with none but Infidels. However, it had the moſt happy Effect upon the Son of the Lady *Wortley Mountague*, who, at her Return to *England*, communicated the Experiment to the Princeſs of *Wales*, now Queen of *England*. It muſt be confeſſed that this Princeſs, abſtracted from her Crown and Titles, was born to encourage the whole Circle of Arts, and to do good to Mankind. She appears as an amiable Philoſopher on the Throne, having never let ſlip one Opportunity of improving the great Talents ſhe received from Nature, nor of exerting her Beneficence. It is ſhe, who being informed that a Daughter of *Milton* was living, but in miſerable Circumſtances, immediately ſent her a conſiderable Preſent. It is ſhe who protects the learned Father *Courayer*. It is ſhe who condeſcended to attempt a Reconciliation between Dr. *Clark* and Dr. *Leibnitz*. The Moment this Princeſs heard of Inoculation, ſhe cauſed an Experiment of it to be made on four Criminals ſentenced to die, and by that means preſerved their Lives doubly; for ſhe not only ſaved them from the Gallows, but by means of this artificial

artificial Small-Pox, prevented their ever having that Diſtemper in a natural Way, with which they would very probably have been attacked one time or other, and might have died of it in a more advanced Age.

The Princeſs being aſſured of the Uſefulneſs of this Operation, cauſed her own Children to be Inoculated. A great Part of the Kingdom followed her Example, and ſince that Time ten thouſand Children, at leaſt, of Perſons of Condition owe in this Manner their Lives to her Majeſty, and to the Lady *Wortley Mountague*: and as many of the Fair Sex are obliged to them for their Beauty.

Upon a general Calculation, threeſcore Perſons in every hundred have the Small-Pox. Of theſe threeſcore, twenty die of it in the moſt favourable Seaſon of Life, and as many more wear the diſagreeable Remains of it in their Faces ſo long as they live. Thus, a fifth Part of Mankind either die, or are diſfigured by this Diſtemper. But it does not prove fatal to ſo much as one, among thoſe who are Inoculated in *Turkey* or in *England*, unleſs the Patient be infirm, or would have died had not the Experiment been made upon him. Beſides, no one

is

is disfigured, no one has the Small-Pox a ſecond Time, if the Inoculation was perfect. It is therefore certain, that had the Lady of ſome *French* Ambaſſador brought this ſecret from *Conſtantinople* to *Paris*, the Nation would have been for ever obliged to her. Then the Duke *d' Villequire*, Father to the Duke *d' Aumont*, who enjoys the moſt vigorous Conſtitution, and is the healthieſt Man in *France*, would not have been cut off in the Flower of his Age.

The Prince of *Soubiſe*, happy in the fineſt Fluſh of Health, would not have been ſnatched away at five and twenty; nor the Dauphin, Grandfather to *Lewis* the fifteenth, have been laid in his Grave in his fiftieth Year. Twenty thouſand Perſons whom the Small-Pox ſwept away at *Paris* in 1723, would have been alive at this time. But are not the *French* fond of Life, and is Beauty ſo inconſiderable an Advantage as to be diſregarded by the Ladies! It muſt be confeſſed that we are an odd kind of People. Perhaps our Nation will imitate, ten Years hence, this Practice of the *Engliſh*, if the Clergy and the Phyſicians will but give them Leave to do it: Or poſſibly our Country Men may introduce Inoculation three Months

Months hence in *France* out of mere whim, in caſe the *Engliſh* ſhould diſcontinue it through Fickleneſs.

I am informed that the *Chineſe* have practiſed Inoculation theſe hundred Years, a Circumſtance that argues very much in its Favour, ſince they are thought to be the wiſeſt and beſt governed People in the World. The *Chineſe* indeed do not communicate this Diſtemper by Inoculation, but at the Noſe, in the ſame Manner as we take Snuff. This is a more agreeable way, but then it produces the like Effects; and proves at the ſame Time, that had Inoculation been practiſed in *France*, it would have ſaved the Lives of Thouſands.

LETTER XII.

ON THE

LORD *BACON*.

NOT long ſince, the trite and frivolous Queſtion following was debated in very polite and learned Company

pany, *viz.* who was the greateſt Man, *Cæſar*, *Alexander*, *Tamerlane*, *Cromwell*, &c.

Some Body anſwered, that Sir *Iſaac Newton* excelled them all. The Gentleman's Aſſertion was very juſt; for if true Greatneſs conſiſts in having received from Heaven a mighty Genius, and in having employed it to enlighten our own Minds and that of others; a Man like Sir *Iſaac Newton*, whoſe equal is hardly found in a thouſand Years, is the truly great Man. And thoſe Politicians and Conquerors (and all ages produce ſome) were generally ſo many illuſtrious wicked Men. That Man claims our reſpect, who commands over the Minds of the reſt of the World by the Force of truth, not thoſe who enſlave their Fellow Creatures: He who is acquainted with the Univerſe, not they who deface it.

Since therefore you deſire me to give you an Account of the famous Perſonages which *England* has given birth to, I ſhall begin with Lord *Bacon*, Mr. *Locke*, Sir *Iſaac Newton*, *&c.* Afterwards the Warriors and Miniſters of State ſhall come in their order.

I muſt begin with the celebrated Viſcount *Verulam*, known in *Europe* by the

the Name of *Bacon*, which was that of his Family. His Father had been Lord Keeper, and himſelf was a great many Years Lord Chanceſſor under King *James* the firſt. Nevertheleſs, amidſt the Intrigues of a Court, and the Affairs of his exalted Employment, which alone were enough to engroſs his whole Time, he yet found ſo much Leiſure for Study, as to make himſelf a great Philoſopher, a good Hiſtorian, and an elegant Writer; and a ſtill more ſurprizing Circumſtance is, that he lived in an Age in which the Art of writing juſtly and elegantly was little known, much leſs true Philoſophy. Lord *Bacon*, as is the Fate of Man, was more eſteemed after his Death than in his Life-time. His Enemies were in the *Britiſh* Court, and his Admirers were Foreigners.

When the Marquiſs *d' Effiat* attended in *England* upon the Princeſs *Henrietta Maria*, Daughter to *Henry* the Fourth, whom King *Charles* the Firſt had married, that Miniſter went and viſited the Lord *Bacon*, who being at that Time ſick in his Bed, received him with the Curtains ſhut cloſe. You reſemble the Angels, ſays the Marquis to him; we hear thoſe Beings ſpoken of perpetually, and we believe

lieve them ſuperior to Men, but are never allowed the Conſolation to ſee them.

You know that this great Man was accuſed of a Crime very unbecoming a Philoſopher, I mean Bribery and Extortion. You know that he was ſentenced by the Houſe of Lords, to pay a Fine of about four hundred thouſand *French* Livres; to loſe his Peerage and his Dignity of Chancellor. But in the preſent Age, the *Engliſh* revere his Memory to ſuch a Degree, that they will ſcarce allow him to have been guilty. In caſe you ſhould ask what are my Thoughts on this Head, I ſhall anſwer you in the Words which I heard the Lord *Bolingbroke* uſe on another Occaſion. Several Gentlemen were ſpeaking, in his Company, of the Avarice with which the late Duke of *Marlborough* had been charged, ſome Examples whereof being given, the Lord *Bolingbroke* was appealed to, (who having been his profeſſed Enemy, might perhaps, without the Imputation of Indecency, have been allowed to clear up that Matter:) *He was ſo great a Man, replied his Lordſhip, that I have forgot his Vices.*

I ſhall therefore confine my ſelf to thoſe Things which ſo juſtly gained Lord *Bacon* the Eſteem of all *Europe*.

The moſt ſingular, and the beſt of all his Pieces, is that which, at this Time, is the moſt uſeleſs and the leaſt read, I mean his *Novum Scientiarum Organum*. This is the Scaffold with which the new Philoſophy was raiſed; and when the Edifice was built, Part of it at leaſt, the Scaffold was no longer of Service.

The Lord *Bacon* was not yet acquainted with Nature, but then he knew, and pointed out, the ſeveral Paths that lead to it. He had deſpiſed in his younger Years the Thing called Philoſophy in the Univerſities; and did all that lay in his Power to prevent thoſe Societies of Men, inſtituted to improve human Reaſon, from depraving it by their Quiddities, the Horrors of the *Vacuum*, their ſubſtantial Forms, and all thoſe impertinent Terms which not only Ignorance had rendered venerable, but which had been made ſacred, by their being ridiculouſly blended with Religion.

He is the Father of experimental Philoſophy. It muſt indeed be confeſſed, that very ſurprizing Secrets had been found

found out before his Time. The Sea Compaſs, Printing, engraving on Copper Plates, Oil-Painting, Looking-Glaſſes; the Art of reſtoring, in ſome Meaſure, old Men to their Sight by Spectacles; Gun-Powder, *&c.* had been diſcovered. A new World had been ſought for, found, and conquer'd. Would not one ſuppoſe that theſe ſublime Diſcoveries had been made by the greateſt Philoſophers, and in Ages much more enlightened than the preſent? But it was far otherwiſe; all theſe great Changes happened in the moſt ſtupid and barbarous Times. Chance only gave Birth to moſt of thoſe Inventions; and it is very probable that what is called Chance, contributed very much to the Diſcovery of *America*; at leaſt it has been always thought, that *Chriſtopher Columbus* undertook his Voyage, merely on the Relation of a Captain of a Ship, which a Storm had drove as far Weſtward as the *Caribee* Iſlands. Be this as it will, Men had ſailed round the World, and could deſtroy Cities by an artificial Thunder more dreadful than the real one: But, then they were not acquainted with the Circulation of the Blood, the Weight of the Air, the Laws of Motion, Light, the Number

Number of our Planets, *&c.* And a Man who maintained a Theſis on *Ariſtotle*'s Categories; on the univerſals *a parte rei*, or ſuch like Nonſenſe, was looked upon as a Prodigy.

The moſt aſtoniſhing, the moſt uſeful Inventions, are not thoſe which reflect the greateſt Honour on the human Mind. It is to a mechanical Inſtinct, which is found in many Men, and not to true Philoſophy, that moſt Arts owe their Origin.

The Diſcovery of Fire, the Art of making Bread, of melting and preparing Metals, of building Houſes, and the Invention of the Shuttle, are infinitely more beneficial to Mankind than Printing or the Sea-Compaſs: And yet theſe Arts were invented by uncultivated, ſavage Men.

What a prodigious uſe the *Greeks* and *Romans* made afterwards of Mechanicks! Nevertheleſs they believed that there were cryſtal Heavens; that the Stars were ſmall Lamps which ſometimes fell into the Sea, and one of their greateſt Philoſophers, after long Reſearches, found that the Stars were ſo many Flints which had been detached from the Earth.

In a Word, no one, before the Lord *Bacon*, was acquainted with experimental Philoſophy,

Philoſophy, nor with the ſeveral phyſical Experiments which have been made ſince his Time. Scarce one of them but is hinted at in his Work, and he himſelf had made ſeveral. He made a kind of pneumatic Engine, by which he gueſſed the elaſticity of the Air. He approached, on all Sides as it were to the Diſcovery of its Weight, and had very near attained it; but ſome Time after *Toricelli* ſeized upon this Truth. In a little Time experimental Philoſophy began to be cultivated on a ſudden in moſt parts of *Europe*. It was a hidden Treaſure which the Lord *Bacon* had ſome Notion of, and which all the Philoſophers, encouraged by his Promiſes, endeavoured to dig up.

But that which ſurprized me moſt was to read in his Work, in expreſs Terms, the new Attraction, the Invention of which is aſcribed to Sir *Iſaac Newton*.

We muſt ſearch, ſays Lord *Bacon*, whether there may not be a kind of magnetic Power, which operates between the Earth and heavy Bodies, between the Moon and the Ocean, between the Planets, *&c.* In another Place he ſays, either heavy Bodies muſt be carried to

wards

wards the Center of the Earth, or muſt be reciprocally attracted by it; and in the latter Caſe it is evident, that the nearer Bodies, in their falling, draw towards the Earth, the ſtronger they will attract one another. We muſt, ſays he, make an Experiment to ſee whether the ſame Clock will go faſter on the Top of a Mountain or at the Bottom of a Mine. Whether the Strength of the Weights decreaſes on the Mountain, and increaſes in the Mine. It is probable that the Earth has a new attractive Power.

This Fore-runner in Philoſophy was alſo an elegant Writer, an Hiſtorian and a Wit.

His moral Eſſays are greatly eſteemed, but they were drawn up in the View of inſtructing rather than of pleaſing: And as they are not a Satyr upon Mankind, like *Rochefoucault*'s Maxims, nor written upon a ſceptical Plan, like *Montagne*'s Eſſays, they are not ſo much read as thoſe two ingenious Authors.

His Hiſtory of *Henry* the Seventh was looked upon as a Maſter-piece, but how is it poſſible that ſome Perſons can preſume to compare ſo little a Work with the Hiſtory of our illuſtrious *Thuanus*?

Speak-

Speaking about the famous Impoſtor *Perkin*, Son to a converted * *Jew*, who aſſumed boldly the Name and Title of *Richard* the Fourth, King of *England*, at the Inſtigation of the Dutcheſs of *Burgundy*; and who diſputed the Crown with *Henry* the Seventh, the Lord *Bacon* writes as follows:

At this Time the King began again to be haunted with Sprites, by the Magick and curious Arts of the Lady Margaret; *who raiſed up the Ghoſt of* Richard *Duke of* York, *ſecond Son to King* Edward *the Fourth, to walk and vex the King* †

After ſuch Time as ſhe (Margaret *of* Burgundy) *thought he* (Perkin Warbeck) *was perfect in his Leſſon, ſhe began to caſt with her ſelf from what Coaſt this* Blazing-Star *ſhould firſt appear, and at what Time it muſt be upon the Horizon of* Ireland; *for there had the like Meteor ſtrong Influence before.* ¶

Methinks our ſagacious *Thuanus* does not give into ſuch Fuſtian, which formerly was looked upon as Sublime; but in this Age is juſtly called Nonſenſe.

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* *John Osbeck.*

† The Hiſtory of the Reign of King *Henry* the ſeventh, *page* 112. *London*, printed in 164 . Folio. ¶ Idem *p.* 116. LETTER

LETTER XIII.

ON

Mr. *LOCKE.*

PERHAPS no Man ever had a more judicious or more methodical Genius, or was a more acute Logician than Mr. *Locke*, and yet he was not deeply skilled in the Mathematicks. This great Man could never ſubject himſelf to the tedious Fatigue of Calculations, nor to the dry Purſuit of Mathematical Truths, which do not at firſt preſent any ſenſible Objects to the Mind; and no one hath given better Proofs than he, that it is poſſible for a Man to have a geometrical Head without the Aſſiſtance of Geometry. Before his Time, ſeveral great Philoſophers had declared, in the moſt poſitive Terms, what the Soul of Man is; but as theſe abſolutely knew nothing

about it, they might very well be allowed to differ entirely in opinion from one another.

In *Greece*, the infant Seat of Arts and of Errors, and where the Grandeur as well as Folly of the human Mind went ſuch prodigious Lengths, the People uſed to reaſon about the Soul in the very ſame Manner as we do.

The divine *Anaxagoras*, in whoſe Honour an Altar was erected, for his having taught Mankind, that the Sun was greater than *Peloponneſus*, that Snow was black, and that the Heavens were of Stone; affirmed that the Soul was an aerial Spirit, but at the ſame time immortal. *Diogenes*, (not he who was a cynical Philoſopher after having coyned baſe Money) declared that the Soul was a Portion of the Subſtance of God; an Idea which we muſt confeſs was very ſublime. *Epicurus* maintained that it was compoſed of Parts in the ſame Manner as the Body.

Ariſtotle, who hath been explained a thouſand Ways, becauſe he is unintelligible, was of opinion, according to ſome of his Diſciples, that the Underſtanding in all Men is one and the ſame Subſtance.

The

The divine *Plato*, Maſter of the divine *Ariſtotle*, and the divine *Socrates*, Maſter of the divine *Plato*, uſed to ſay, that the Soul was corporeal and eternal. No doubt but the Demon of *Socrates* had inſtructed him in the Nature of it. Some People, indeed, pretend, that a Man who boaſted his being attended by a familiar Genius, muſt infallibly be either a Knave or a Madman; but this kind of People are ſeldom ſatisfied with any Thing but Reaſon.

With regard to the Fathers of the Church, ſeveral in the primitive Ages believed that the Soul was human, and the Angels and God corporeal. Men naturally improve upon every Syſtem. St. *Bernard*, as Father *Mabillon* confeſſeth, taught that the Soul after Death doth not ſee God in the celeſtial Regions, but converſeth with *Chriſt*'s human Nature only. However, he was not believed this Time on his bare Word; the Adventure of the Cruſade having a little ſunk the Credit of his Oracles. Afterwards a thouſand Schoolmen aroſe, ſuch as the irrefragable * Doctor, the ſubtil Doctor †, the angelic Doctor §,

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* *Alexander de Hales.* † *Duns Scotus.*
§ St. *Thomas.*

the ſeraphic Doctor §, and the cherubic Doctor, who were all ſure that they had a very clear and diſtinct Idea of the Soul, and yet wrote in ſuch a Manner, that one would conclude they were reſolved no one ſhould underſtand a Word in their Writings. Our *Des Cartes*, born to diſcover the Errors of Antiquity, and at the ſame Time to ſubſtitute his own; and hurried away by that ſyſtematic Spirit which throws a Cloud over the Minds of the greateſt Men, thought he had demonſtrated that the Soul is the ſame Thing as Thought, in the ſame Manner as Matter, in his Opinion, is the ſame as Extenſion. He aſſerted, that Man thinks eternally, and that the Soul at its coming into the Body, is informed with the whole Series of metaphyſical Notions; knowing God, infinite Space, poſſeſſing all abſtract Ideas; in a Word, completely endued with the moſt ſublime Lights, which it unhappily forgets at its iſſuing from the Womb.

Father *Malbranche*, in his ſublime Illuſions, not only admitted innate Ideas, but did not doubt of our living wholly in God, and that God is, as it were, our Soul.

§ St *Bonaventure*.

Such

Such a Multitude of Reaſoners having written the Romance of the Soul, a Sage at laſt aroſe, who gave, with an Air of the greateſt Modeſty, the Hiſtory of it. Mr. *Locke* hath diſplayed the human Soul, in the ſame Manner as an excellent Anatomiſt explains the Springs of the human Body. He every where takes the Light of Phyſicks for his Guide. He ſometimes preſumes to ſpeak affirmatively, but then he preſumes alſo to doubt. Inſtead of concluding at once what we know not, he examines gradually what we would know. He takes an Infant at the Inſtant of his Birth; he traces, Step by Step, the Progreſs of his Underſtanding; examines what Things he hath in common with Beaſts, and what he poſſeſſeth above them. Above all he conſults himſelf; the being conſcious that he himſelf thinks.

I ſhall leave, ſays he, to thoſe who know more of this Matter than my ſelf, the examining whether the Soul exiſts before or after the Organization of our Bodies. But I confeſs that it is my Lot to be animated with one of thoſe heavy Souls which do not think always; and I am even ſo unhappy as not to conceive, that

that it is more neceſſary the Soul ſhould think perpetually, than that Bodies ſhould be for ever in Motion.

With regard to my ſelf, I ſhall boaſt that I have the Honour to be as ſtupid in this Particular as Mr. *Locke*. No one ſhall ever make me believe, that I think always; and I am as little inclined as he could be, to fancy that ſome Weeks after I was conceived, I was a very learned Soul; knowing at that Time a thouſand Things which I forgot at my Birth; and poſſeſſing when in the Womb, (though to no Manner of Purpoſe,) Knowledge which I loſt the Inſtant I had occaſion for it; and which I have never ſince been able to recover perfectly.

Mr. *Locke* after having deſtroyed innate Ideas; after having fully renounced the Vanity of believing that we think always; after having laid down, from the moſt ſolid Principles, that Ideas enter the Mind through the Senſes; having examined our ſimple and complex Ideas; having traced the human Mind through its ſeveral Operations; having ſhewed that all the Languages in the World are imperfect, and the great Abuſe that is made of Words every Moment; he at laſt comes to conſider the Extent or rather

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the narrow Limits of human Knowledge. It was in this Chapter he preſumed to advance, but very modeſtly, the following Words. *We ſhall, perhaps, never be capable of knowing, whether a Being, purely material, thinks or not.* This ſage Aſſertion was, by more Divines than one, looked upon as a ſcandalous Declaration, that the Soul is material and mortal. Some *Engliſhmen*, devout after their Way, ſounded an Alarm. The Superſtitious are the ſame in Society as Cowards in an Army; they themſelves are ſeized with a panic Fear, and communicate it to others. It was loudly exclaimed, that Mr. *Locke* intended to deſtroy Religion: nevertheleſs, Religion had nothing to do in the Affair, it being a Queſtion purely Philoſophical, altogether independent on Faith and Revelation. Mr. *Locke*'s Opponents needed but to examine, calmly and impartially, whether the declaring that Matter can think, implies a Contradiction; and whether God is able to communicate Thought to Matter. But Divines are too apt to begin their Declarations with ſaying, that God is offended when People differ from them in Opinion; in which they too much reſemble the bad Poets, who uſed to declare publickly, that *Boileau* ſpake irreverently

reverently of *Lewis* the Fourteenth, because he ridiculed their ſtupid Productions. Biſhop *Stillingfleet* got the Reputation of a calm and unprejudiced Divine, becauſe he did not expreſsly make uſe of injurious Terms in his Diſpute with Mr. *Locke*. That Divine entered the Liſts againſt him, but was defeated; for he argued as a Schoolman, and *Locke* as a Philoſopher, who was perfectly acquainted with the ſtrong as well as the weak Side of the human Mind, and who fought with Weapons whoſe Temper he knew. If I might preſume to give my Opinion on ſo delicate a Subject after Mr. *Locke*, I would ſay, that Men have long diſputed on the Nature and the Immortality of the Soul. With regard to its Immortality, it is impoſſible to give a Demonſtration of it, ſince its Nature is ſtill the Subject of Controverſy; which however muſt be thoroughly underſtood, before a Perſon can be able to determine whether it be immortal or not. Human Reaſon is ſo little able, merely by its own Strength, to demonſtrate the Immortality of the Soul, that it was abſolutely neceſſary Religion ſhould reveal it to us. It is of Advantage to Society in general, that Mankind ſhould believe the Soul to be im-

immortal; Faith commands us to do this; nothing more is required, and the Matter is cleared up at once. But it is otherwiſe with reſpect to its Nature, it is of little Importance to Religion, which only requires the Soul to be virtuous, whatever Subſtance it may be made of. It is a Clock which is given us to regulate, but the Artiſt hath not told us of what Materials the Spring of this Clock is compoſed.

I am a Body, and, I think, that is all I know of the Matter. Shall I aſcribe to an unknown Cauſe, what I can ſo eaſily impute to the only ſecond Cauſe I am acquainted with? Here all the School Philoſophers interrupt me with their Arguments, and declare that there is only Extenſion and Solidity in Bodies, and that there they can have nothing but Motion and Figure. Now Motion, Figure, Extenſion and Solidity cannot form a Thought, and Conſequently the Soul cannot be Matter. All this, ſo often repeated mighty Series of Reaſoning, amounts to no more than this; I am abſolutely ignorant what Matter is; I gueſs, but imperfectly, ſome Properties of it; now, I abſolutely cannot tell whether theſe Properties may be joined to Thought. As I therefore know nothing, I maintain

poſitively

poſitively that Matter cannot think. In this Manner do the Schools reaſon.

Mr. *Locke* addreſſed theſe Gentlemen in the candid, ſincere Manner following. At leaſt confeſs your ſelves to be as ignorant as I. Neither your Imaginations nor mine are able to comprehend in what manner a Body is ſuſceptible of Ideas; and do you conceive better in what manner a Subſtance, of what kind ſoever, is ſuſceptible of them? As you cannot comprehend either Matter or Spirit, why will you preſume to aſſert any thing?

The ſuperſtitious Man comes afterwards, and declares, that all thoſe muſt be burnt for the Good of their Souls, who ſo much as ſuſpect that it is poſſible for the Body to think without any foreign Aſſiſtance. But what would theſe People ſay, ſhould they themſelves be proved irreligious? And indeed, what Man can preſume to aſſert, without being guilty at the ſame time of the greateſt Impiety, that it is impoſſible for the Creator to form Matter with Thought and Senſation? Conſider only, I beg you, what a Dilemma you bring yourſelves into; you who confine in this Manner the Power of the Creator. Beaſts have the ſame Organs, the ſame Senſations, the ſame

Perceptions

Perceptions as we; they have Memory, and combine certain Ideas. In caſe it was not in the Power of God to animate Matter, and inform it with Senſation, the Conſequence would be, either that Beaſts are mere Machines, or that they have a ſpiritual Soul.

Methinks it is clearly evident that Beaſts cannot be mere Machines, which I prove thus. God hath given them the very ſame Organs of Senſation as to us: If therefore they have no Senſation, God hath created a uſeleſs Thing; now according to your own Confeſſion God doth nothing in vain; he therefore did not create ſo many Organs of Senſation, merely for them to be uninformed with this Faculty; conſequently Beaſts are not mere Machines. Beaſts, according to your Aſſertion, cannot be animated with a ſpiritual Soul; you will therefore, in ſpight of your ſelf, be reduced to this only Aſſertion, *viz.* that God hath endued the Organs of Beaſts, who are mere Matter, with the Faculties of Senſation and Perception, which you call Inſtinct in them. But why may not God, if he pleaſes, communicate to our more delicate Organs, that Faculty of feeling, perceiving, and thinking, which we call human Reaſon?

To

To whatever ſide you turn, you are forced to acknowledge your own Ignorance, and the boundleſs Power of the Creator. Exclaim therefore no more againſt the ſage, the modeſt Philoſophy of Mr *Locke*, which, ſo far from interfering with Religion, would be of uſe to demonſtrate the Truth of it, in caſe Religion wanted any ſuch Support. For what Philoſophy can be of amore religious Nature than that, which affirming nothing but what it conceives clearly; and conſcious of its own Weakneſs, declares that we muſt always have recourſe to God in our examining of the firſt Principles.

Beſides, we muſt not be apprehenſive, that any Philoſophical Opinion will ever prejudice the Religion of a Country. Although our Demonſtrations claſh directly with our Myſteries, that is nothing to the Purpoſe, for the latter are not leſs revered upon that Account by our Chriſtian Philoſophers, who know very well that the Objects of Reaſon and thoſe of Faith are of a very different Nature. Philoſophers will never form a religious Sect, the Reaſon of which is, their Writings are not calculated for the Vulgar, and they themſelves are free from Enthuſiaſm. If we divide Mankind into twenty Parts, it will be

be found that nineteen of these consist of Persons employed in manual Labour, who will never know that such a Man as Mr. *Locke* existed. In the remaining twentieth Part how few are Readers? And among such as are so, twenty amuse themselves with Romances to one who studies Philosophy. The thinking Part of Mankind are confined to a very small Number, and these will never disturb the Peace and Tranquility of the World.

Neither *Montagne*, *Locke*, *Bayle*, *Spinoza*, *Hobbes*, the Lord *Shaftsbury*, *Collins* nor *Toland* lighted up the Firebrand of Discord in their Countries; this hath generally been the Work of Divines, who being at first puffed up with the Ambition of becoming Chiefs of a Sect, soon grew very desirous of being at the Head of a Party. But what do I say? All the Works of the modern Philosophers put together will never make so much Noise as even the Dispute which arose among the *Franciscans*, merely about the Fashion of their Sleeves and of their Cowls.

LETTER

LETTER XIV.

ON

DES CARTES

AND

Sir ISAAC NEWTON.

A *Frenchman* who arrives in *London*, will find Philoſophy, like every Thing elſe, very much changed there. He had left the World a *plenum*, and he now finds it a *vacuum*. At *Paris* the Univerſe is ſeen, compoſed of Vortices, of ſubtile Matter; but nothing like it is ſeen in *London*. In *France*, it is the Preſſure of the Moon that cauſes the Tides; but in *England* it is the Sea that gravitates towards the Moon; ſo that when you think the Moon ſhould make it Flood with us, thoſe Gentlemen fancy it ſhould be Ebb, which, very unluckily, cannot be proved. For to be able to do this, it is neceſſary the Moon

Moon and the Tides ſhould have been enquired into, at the very inſtant of the Creation.

You will obſerve farther, that the Sun, which in *France* is ſaid to have nothing to do in the Affair, comes in here for very near a quarter of its Aſſiſtance. According to your *Carteſians*, every Thing is performed by an Impulſion, of which we have very little Notion; and according to Sir *Iſaac Newton*, it is by an Attraction, the Cauſe of which is as much unknown to us. At *Paris* you imagine that the Earth is ſhaped like a Melon, or of an oblique Figure; at *London* it hath an oblate one. A *Carteſian* declares that Light exiſts in the Air; but a *Newtonian* aſſerts that it comes from the Sun in ſix Minutes and a half. The ſeveral Operations of your Chymiſtry are performed by Acids, Alkalies and ſubtile Matter; but Attraction prevails even in Chymiſtry among the *Engliſh*.

The very Eſſence of Things is totally changed. You neither are agreed upon the Definition of the Soul, nor on that of Matter. *Deſcartes*, as I obſerved in my laſt, maintains that the Soul is the ſame Thing with Thought, and Mr. *Locke*

Locke hath given a pretty good Proof of the contrary.

Deſcartes aſſerts farther, that Extenſion alone conſtitutes Matter, but Sir *Iſaac* adds Solidity to it.

How furiouſly contradictory are theſe Opinions!

Non noſtrum inter vos tantas componere lites. Virgil Eclog. III.

It is not for us to end ſuch great Diſputes.

This famous *Newton*, this Deſtroyer of the *Carteſian* Syſtem, died in *March*, *Anno.* 1727. His Countrymen honoured him in his Life-Time, and interred him as though he had been a King who had made his People happy.

The *Engliſh* read with the higheſt Satisfaction, and tranſlated into their Tongue, the Elogium of Sir *Iſaac Newton*, which Mr. *de Fontenelle*, ſpoke in the Academy of Sciences. Mr. *de Fontenelle* preſides as Judge over Philoſophers; and the *Engliſh* expected his Deciſion, as a ſolemn Declaration of the Superiority of the *Engliſh* Philoſophy over that of the *French*. But when it was found that this Gentleman

Gentleman had compared *Des Cartes* to to Sir *Iſaac*, the whole Royal Society in *London* roſe up in Arms. So far from acquieſcing with Mr. *Fontenelle*'s Judgment, they criticiſed his Diſcourſe. And even ſeveral (who however were not the ableſt Philoſophers in that Body) were offended at the Compariſon; and for no other Reaſon but becauſe *Des Cartes* was a *Frenchman*.

It muſt be confeſſed that theſe two great Men differed very much in Conduct, in Fortune, and in Philoſophy.

Nature had indulged *Des Cartes* a ſhining and ſtrong Imagination, whence he became a very ſingular Perſon both in private Life, and in his Manner of Reaſoning. This Imagination could not conceal it ſelf even in his Philoſophical Works, which are every where adorned with very ſhining, ingenious Metaphors and Figures. Nature had almoſt made him a Poet; and indeed he wrote a Piece of Poetry for the Entertainment of *Chriſtina* Queen of *Sweden*, which however was ſuppreſſed in Honour to his Memory.

He embraced a Military Life for ſome Time, and afterwards becoming a compleat Philoſopher, he did not think the

Paſſion of Love derogatory to his Character. He had by his Miſtreſs a Daughter called *Froncine*, who died young, and was very much regretted by him. Thus he experienced every Paſſion incident to Mankind.

He was a long Time of Opinion, that it would be neceſſary for him to fly from the Society of his Fellow Creatures, and eſpecially from his native Country, in order to enjoy the Happineſs of cultivating his Philoſophical Studies in full Liberty.

Des Cartes was very right, for his Cotemporaries were not knowing enough to improve and enlighten his Underſtanding, and were capable of little elſe than of giving him Uneaſineſs.

He left *France* purely to go in ſearch of Truth, which was then perſecuted by the wretched Philoſophy of the Schools. However, he found that Reaſon was as much diſguiſed and depraved in the Univerſities of *Holland*, into which he withdrew, as in his own Country. For at the Time that the *French* condemned the only Propoſitions of his Philoſophy which were true, he was perſecuted by the pretended Philoſopher of *Holland*, who, underſtood him no better; and having a near-

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er View of his Glory, hated his Perſon the more, ſo that he was obliged to leave *Utrecht*. *Des Cartes* was injuriouſly accuſed of being an Atheiſt, the laſt Refuge of religious Scandal: And he who had employed all the Sagacity and Penetration of his Genius, in ſearching for new Proofs of the Exiſtence of a God, was ſuſpected to believe there was no ſuch Being.

Such a Perſecution from all Sides, muſt neceſſarily ſuppoſe a moſt exalted Merit as well as a very diſtinguiſhed Reputation, and indeed he poſſeſſed both. Reaſon at that Time darted a Ray upon the World through the Gloom of the Schools, and the Prejudices of popular Superſtition. At laſt his Name ſpread ſo univerſally, that the *French* were deſirous of bringing him back into his native Country by Rewards, and accordingly offered him an annual Penſion of a thouſand Crowns. Upon theſe Hopes *Des Cartes* returned to *France*; paid the Fees of his Patent, which was ſold at that Time, but no Penſion was ſettled upon him! Thus diſappointed, he returned to his Solitude in *North-Holland*, where he again purſued the Study of Philoſophy, whilſt the great *Galileo*, at fourſcore Years of Age, was groaning in the Priſons of the

Inquiſition, only for having demonſtrated the Earth's Motion.

At laſt *Des Cartes* was ſnatched from the World in the Flower of his Age at *Stockholm*. His Death was owing to a bad Regimen, and he expired in the Midſt of ſome *Literati* who were his Enemies, and under the Hands of a Phyſician to whom he was odious.

The Progreſs of Sir *Iſaac Newton*'s Life was quite different. He lived happy, and very much honoured in his native Country, to the Age of fourſcore and five Years.

It was his peculiar Felicity, not only to be born in a Country of Liberty, but in an Age when all Scholaſtic Impertinencies were baniſhed from the World. Reaſon alone was cultivated, and Mankind could only be his Pupil, not his Enemy.

One very ſingular Difference in the Lives of theſe two great Men is, that Sir *Iſaac*, during the long Courſe of Years he enjoyed, was never ſenſible to any Paſſion, was not ſubject to the common Frailties of Mankind, nor ever had any Commerce with Women; a Circumſtance which was aſſured me by the Phyſician and Surgeon who attended him in his laſt Moments.

We may admire Sir *Iſaac Newton* on this Occaſion, but then we muſt not cenſure *Des Cartes*.

The Opinion that generally prevails in *England* with regard to theſe two Philoſophers is, that the latter was a Dreamer, and the former a Sage.

Very few People in *England* read *Des Cartes*, whoſe works indeed are now uſeleſs. On the other ſide, but a ſmall Number peruſe thoſe of Sir *Iſaac*, becauſe to do this the Student muſt be deeply skilled in the Mathematicks, otherwiſe thoſe Works will be unintelligible to him. But notwithſtanding this, theſe great Men are the Subject of every One's Diſcourſe. Sir *Iſaac Newton* is allowed every Advantage, whilſt *Des Cartes* is not indulged a ſingle one. According to ſome, it is to the former that we owe the Diſcovery of a *Vacuum*, that the Air is a heavy Body, and the Invention of Teleſcopes. In a Word, Sir *Iſaac Newton* is here as the *Hercules* of fabulous Story, to whom the Ignorant aſcribed all the Feats of ancient Heroes.

In a Criticiſm that was made in *London* on Mr. *de Fontenelle*'s Diſcourſe, the Writer preſumed to aſſert that *Des Cartes* was not a great Geometrician. Thoſe who make

make ſuch a Declaration may juſtly be reproached with flying in their Maſter's Face. *Des Cartes* extended the Limits of Geometry as far beyond the Place where he found them, as Sir *Iſaac* did after him. The former firſt taught the Method of expreſſing Curves by Equations This Geometry which, thanks to him for it, is now grown common, was ſo abſtruſe in his Time, that not ſo much as one Profeſſor would undertake to explain it; and *Schotten* in *Holland*, and *Format* in *France*, were the only Men who underſtood it.

He applied this Geometrical and inventive Genius to Dioptricks, which, when treated of by him, became a new Art. And if he was miſtaken in ſome things, the Reaſon of that is, a Man who diſcovers a new Tract of Land cannot at once know all the Properties of the Soil. Thoſe who come after him, and make theſe Lands fruitful, are at leaſt obliged to him for the Diſcovery. I will not deny but that there are innumerable Errors in the reſt of *Des Cartes*'s Works.

Geometry was a Guide he himſelf had in ſome Meaſure faſhioned, which would have conducted him ſafely through the ſeveral Paths of natural Philoſophy. Nevertheleſs

theleſs he at laſt abandoned this Guide, and gave entirely into the Humour of forming Hypotheſes; and then Philoſophy was no more than an ingenious Romance, fit only to amuſe the Ignorant. He was miſtaken in the Nature of the Soul, in the Proofs of the Exiſtence of a God, in Matter, in the Laws of Motion, and in the Nature of Light. He admitted innate Ideas, he invented new Elements, he created a World; he made Man according to his own Fancy; and it is juſtly ſaid, that the Man of *Des Cartes* is in Fact that of *Des Cartes* only, very different from the real one.

He puſhed his metaphyſical Errors ſo far, as to declare that two and two make four, for no other Reaſon but becauſe God would have it ſo. However, it will not be making him too great a Compliment if we affirm that he was valuable even in his Miſtakes. He deceived himſelf, but then it was at leaſt in a methodical Way. He deſtroyed all the abſurd Chimæras with which Youth had been infatuated for two thouſand Years. He taught his Cotemporaries how to reaſon, and enabled them to employ his own Weapons againſt himſelf. If *Des Cartes* did not pay in good Money, he however did

great

great Service in crying down that of a baſe Alloy.

I indeed believe, that very few will preſume to compare his Philoſophy in any reſpect with that of Sir *Iſaac Newton*. The former is an Eſſay, the latter a Maſter-Piece: But then the Man who firſt brought us to the Path of Truth, was perhaps as great a Genius as he who afterwards conducted us through it.

Des Cartes gave Sight to the Blind. Theſe ſaw the Errors of Antiquity and of the Sciences. The Path he ſtruck out is ſince become boundleſs. *Rohault*'s little Work was during ſome Years a complete Syſtem of Phyſicks; but now all the Tranſactions of the ſeveral Academies in *Europe* put together do not form ſo much as the Beginning of a Syſtem. In fathoming this Abyſs no Bottom hath been found. We are now to examine what Diſcoveries Sir *Iſaac Newton* hath made in it.

LET-

LETTER XV.

ON

ATTRACTION.

THE Diſcoveries which gained Sir *Iſaac Newton*, ſo univerſal a Reputation, relate to the Syſtem of the World, to Light, to Geometrical Infinities; and laſtly to Chronology, with which he uſed to amuſe himſelf after the Fatigue of his ſeverer Studies.

I will now acquaint you (without Prolixity if poſſible) with the few Things I have been able to comprehend of all theſe ſublime Ideas. With regard to the Syſtem of our World, Diſputes were a long time maintained, on the Cauſe that turns the Planets, and keeps them in their Orbits; and on thoſe Cauſes which make all Bodies here below deſcend towards the Surface of the Earth.

The Syſtem of *Des Cartes* explained and improved ſince his Time, ſeemed to give

give a plauſible Reaſon for all thoſe Phænomena; and this Reaſon ſeemed more juſt, as it is ſimple, and intelligible to all Capacities. But in Philoſophy, a Student ought to doubt of the things he fancies he underſtands too eaſily, as much as of thoſe he doth not underſtand.

Gravity, the falling of accelerated Bodies on the Earth, the Revolution of the Planets in their Orbits, their Rotations round their Axis, all this is mere Motion. Now Motion cannot perhaps be conceived any otherwiſe than by Impulſion; therefore all thoſe Bodies muſt be impelled. But by what are they impelled. All Space is full, it therefore is filled with a very ſubtil Matter, ſince this is imperceptible to us; this Matter goes from Weſt to Eaſt, ſince all the Planets are carried from Weſt to Eaſt. Thus from Hypotheſis to Hypotheſis, from one Appearance to another, Philoſophers have imagined a vaſt Whirlpool of ſubtil Matter, in which the Planets are carried round the Sun. They alſo have created another particular Vortex which floats in the great one, and which turns daily round the Planets. When all this is done, it is pretended that Gravity depends on this diurnal Motion; for, ſay theſe, the

the Velocity of the ſubtil Matter that turns round our little Vortex, muſt be ſeventeen times more rapid than that of the Earth; or, in caſe its Velocity is ſeventeen times greater than that of the Earth, its centrifugal Force muſt be vaſtly greater, and conſequently impel all Bodies towards the Earth. This is the Cauſe of Gravity, according to the *Carteſian* Syſtem. But the Theoriſt, before he calculated the centrifugal Force and Velocity of the ſubtil Matter, ſhould firſt have been certain that it exiſted.

Sir *Iſaac Newton* ſeems to have deſtroyed all theſe great and little Vortices, both that which carries the Planets round the Sun, as well as the other which ſuppoſeth every Planet to turn on its own Axis.

Firſt, with regard to the pretended little Vortex of the Earth, it is demonſtrated that it muſt loſe its Motion by inſenſible Degrees; it is demonſtrated, that if the Earth ſwims in a Fluid, its Denſity muſt be equal to that of the Earth; and in caſe its Denſity be the ſame, all the Bodies we endeavour to move muſt meet with an inſuperable Reſiſtance.

With regard to the great Vortices, they are ſtill more chimerical, and it is impoſſi-

impoſſible to make them agree with *Kepler*'s Law, the Truth of which hath been demonſtrated. Sir *Iſaac Newton* ſhews, that the Revolution of the Fluid in which *Jupiter* is ſuppoſed to be carried, is not the ſame with regard to the Revolution of the Fluid of the Earth, as the Revolution of *Jupiter* with reſpect to that of the Earth. He proves, that as the Planets make their Revolutions in Ellipſis's, and conſequently being at a much greater Diſtance one from the other in their *Aphelia*, and a little nearer in their *Perihelia*; the Earth's Velocity, for Inſtance, ought to be greater, when it is nearer *Venus* and *Mars*, becauſe the Fluid that carries it along, being then more preſſed, ought to have a greater Motion; and yet it is even then that the Earth's Motion is ſlower.

He proves that there is no ſuch thing as a celeſtial Matter which goes from Weſt to Eaſt, ſince the Comets traverſe thoſe Spaces, ſometimes from Eaſt to Weſt, and at other times from North to South.

In fine, the better to reſolve, if poſſible, every Difficulty, he proves, and even by Experiments, that it is impoſſible there ſhould be a *Plenum*; and brings back

back the *Vacuum*, which *Ariſtotle* and *Des Cartes* had baniſhed from the World.

Having by theſe and ſeveral other Arguments deſtroyed the *Carteſian* Vortices, he deſpaired of ever being able to diſcover, whether there is a ſecret Principle in Nature, which, at the ſame time, is the Cauſe of the Motion of all celeſtial Bodies, and that of Gravity on the Earth. But being retired in 1666, upon Account of the Plague, to a Solitude near *Cambridge*; as he was walking one Day in his Garden, and ſaw ſome Fruits fall from a Tree, he fell into a profound Meditation on that Gravity, the Cauſe of which had ſo long been ſought, but in vain, by all the Philoſophers, whilſt the Vulgar think there is nothing myſterious in it. He ſaid to himſelf, that from what Height ſoever, in our Hemiſphere, thoſe Bodies might deſcend, their Fall would certainly be in the Progreſſion diſcovered by *Galileo*; and the Spaces they run through would be as the Square of the Times. Why may not this Power which cauſeth heavy Bodies to deſcend, and is the ſame without any ſenſible Diminution at the remoteſt Diſtance from the Center of the Earth, or on the Summits of the higheſt Mountains; Why, ſaid Sir *Iſaac*, may not this Power extend

as

as high as the Moon? And in Caſe, its Influence reacheth ſo far, is it not very probable that this Power retains it in its Orbit, and determines its Motion? But in caſe the Moon obeys this Principle (whatever it be) may we not conclude very naturally, that the reſt of the Planets are equally ſubject to it? In caſe this Power exiſts (which beſides is proved) it muſt increaſe in an inverſe *Ratio* of the Squares of the Diſtances. All therefore that remains is, to examine how far a heavy Body, which ſhould fall upon the Earth from a moderate Height, would go; and how far in the ſame Time, a Body which ſhould fall from the Orbit of the Moon, would deſcend. To find this, nothing is wanted but the Meaſure of the Earth, and the Diſtance of the Moon from it.

Thus Sir *Iſaac Newton* reaſoned. But at that time the *Engliſh* had but a very imperfect Meaſure of our Globe, and depended on the uncertain Suppoſition of Mariners, who computed a Degree to contain but ſixty *Engliſh* Miles, whereas it conſiſts in reality of near ſeventy. As this falſe Computation did not agree with the Concluſions which Sir *Iſaac* intended to draw from them, he laid aſide this Purſuit.

Purſuit. A half-learned Philoſopher, remarkable only for his Vanity, would have made the Meaſure of the Earth agree, any how, with his Syſtem: Sir *Iſaac*, however, choſe rather to quit the Reſearches he was then engaged in. But after Mr. *Picart* had meaſured the Earth exactly, by tracing that Meridian, which redounds ſo much to the Honour of the *French*, Sir *Iſaac Newton* reſumed his former Reflections, and found his Account in Mr. *Picart*'s Calculation.

A Circumſtance which hath always appeared wonderful to me, is, that ſuch ſublime Diſcoveries ſhould have been made by the ſole Aſſiſtance of a Quadrant and a little Arithmetic.

The Circumference of the Earth is one hundred twenty three Millions, two hundred forty nine thouſand ſix hundred Feet. This, among other things, is neceſſary to prove the Syſtem of Attraction.

The Inſtant we know the Earth's Circumference, and the Diſtance of the Moon, we know that of the Moon's Orbit, and the Diameter of this Orbit. The Moon performs its Revolution in that Orbit in twenty ſeven Days, ſeven Hours, forty three Minutes. It is demonſtrated, that the Moon in its mean Motion makes an

hundred

hundred and fourſcore and ſeven thouſand, nine hundred and ſixty Feet (of *Paris*) in a Minute. It is likewiſe demonſtrated, by a known Theorem, that the central Force which ſhould make a Body fall from the Height of the Moon, would make its Velocity no more than fifteen *Paris* Feet in a Minute of time. Now, if the Law by which Bodies gravitate, and attract one another in an inverſe Ratio of the Squares of the Diſtances be true; if the ſame Power acts, according to that Law, throughout all Nature; it is evident that as the Earth is ſixty Semi-diameters diſtant from the Moon, a heavy Body muſt neceſſarily fall (on the Earth) fifteen Feet in the firſt ſecond, and fifty four thouſand Feet in the firſt Minute.

Now a heavy Body falls, in reality, fifteen Feet in the firſt ſecond, and goes in the firſt Minute fifty four thouſand Foot, which Number is the Square of ſixty multiplied by fifteen. Bodies therefore gravitate in an inverſe Ratio of the Squares of the Diſtances; conſequently, what cauſeth Gravity on Earth, and keeps the Moon in its Orbit, is one and the ſame Power; it being demonſtrated that the Moon gravitates on the Earth, which

is

is the Center of its particular Motion, it is demonſtrated that the Earth, and the Moon gravitate on the Sun which is the Center of their annual Motion.

The reſt of the Planets muſt be ſubject to this general Law; and if this Law exiſts, theſe Planets muſt follow the Laws which *Kepler* diſcovered. All theſe Laws, all theſe Relations are indeed obſerved by the Planets with the utmoſt Exactneſs; therefore the Power of Attraction cauſes all the Planets to gravitate towards the Sun, in like manner as the Moon gravitates towards our Globe.

Finally, as in all Bodies, Re-action is equal to Action, it is certain that the Earth gravitates alſo towards the Moon; and that the Sun gravitates towards both: That every one of the Satellites of *Saturn* gravitates towards the other four, and the other four towards it: All five towards *Saturn*, and *Saturn* towards all. That it is the ſame with regard to *Jupiter*; and that all theſe Globes are attracted by the Sun, which is reciprocally attracted by them.

This Power of Gravitation acts proportionably to the Quantity of Matter in Bodies, a Truth which Sir *Iſaac* hath demonſtrated by Experiments. This new

Diſcovery hath been of uſe to ſhew, that the Sun (the Center of the planetary Syſtem) attracts them all in a direct Ratio of their Quantity of Matter combined with their Nearneſs. From hence Sir *Iſaac*, riſing by Degrees to Diſcoveries which ſeemed not to be formed for the human Mind, is bold enough to compute the Quantity of Matter contained in the Sun and in every Planet; and in this Manner ſhews, from the ſimple Laws of Mechanicks, that every celeſtial Globe ought neceſſarily to be where it is placed.

His bare Principle of the Laws of Gravitation, accounts for all the apparent Inequalities in the Courſe of the celeſtial Globes. The Variations of the Moon are a neceſſary Conſequence of thoſe Laws. Moreover, the Reaſon is evidently ſeen why the Nodes of the Moon perform their Revolutions in nineteen Years, and thoſe of the Earth in about twenty ſix thouſand. The ſeveral Appearances obſerved in the Tides, are alſo a very ſimple Effect of this Attraction. The Proximity of the Moon when at the full, and when it is new, and its Diſtance in the Quadratures of Quarters combined with the Action of the Sun, exhibit a

ſenſible Reaſon why the Ocean ſwells and ſinks.

After having ſhewn, by his ſublime Theory, the Courſe and Inequalities of the Planets, he ſubjects Comets to the ſame Law. The Orbit of theſe Fires (unknown for ſo great a Series of Years,) which was the Terror of Mankind, and the Rock againſt which Philoſophy ſplit; placed by *Ariſtotle* below the Moon, and ſent back by *Des Cartes* above the Sphere of *Saturn*, is at laſt placed in its proper Seat by Sir *Iſaac Newton*.

He proves that Comets are ſolid Bodies which move in the Sphere of the Sun's Activity; and that they deſcribe an Ellipſis ſo very eccentric, and ſo near to Parabola's, that certain Comets muſt take up above five hundred Years in their Revolution.

The learned Dr. *Halley* is of opinion, that the Comet ſeen in 1680, is the ſame which appeared in *Julius Cæſar*'s Time. This ſhows more than any other, that Comets are hard, opake Bodies; for it deſcended ſo near to the Sun, as to come within a ſixth Part of the Diameter of this Planet from it; and conſequently might have contracted a Degree of Heat two thouſand Times ſtronger than that

of red hot Iron; and would have been ſoon diſperſed in Vapour, had it not been a firm denſe Body. The gueſſing the Courſe of Comets began then to be very much in vogue: The celebrated *Bernoulli* concluded by his Syſtem, that the famous Comet of 1680, would appear again the 17th of *May* 1719. Not a ſingle Aſtronomer in *Europe* went to Bed that Night; however they needed not to have broke their Reſt, for the famous Comet never appeared. There is at leaſt more Cunning, if not more Certainty, in fixing its Return to ſo remote a Diſtance as five hundred and ſeventy five Years. As to Mr. *Whiſton*, he affirmed very ſeriouſly, that in the time of the Deluge a Comet overflowed the terreſtrial Globe; and he was ſo unreaſonable as to wonder that People laughed at him for making ſuch an Aſſertion. The Ancients were almoſt in the ſame way of thinking with Mr. *Whiſton*, and fancied that Comets were always the Fore-runners of ſome great Calamity which was to befall Mankind. Sir *Iſaac Newton*, on the contrary, ſuſpected that they are very beneficent; and that Vapours exhale from them merely to nouriſh and vivify the Planets, which imbibe in their Courſe the ſeveral Particles the Sun hath detached

detached from the Comets; an Opinion which at leaſt is more probable than the former. But this is not all. If this Power of Gravitation or Attraction acts on all the celeſtial Globes, it acts undoubtedly on the ſeveral Parts of theſe Globes: For in caſe Bodies attract one another in Proportion to the Quantity of Matter contained in them, it can only be in Proportion to the Quantity of their Parts; and if this Power is found in the whole, it is undoubtedly in the half, in the quarter, in the eighth Part, and ſo on in *infinitum.*

This is Attraction, the great Spring by which all Nature is moved. Sir *Iſaac Newton* after having demonſtrated the Exiſtence of this Principle, plainly foreſaw that its very Name would offend; and therefore this Philoſopher in more Places than one of his Books, gives the Reader ſome Caution about it. He bids him beware of confounding this Name with what the Ancients called occult Qualities; but to be ſatisfied with knowing that there is in all Bodies a central Force which acts to the utmoſt Limits of the Univerſe, according to the invariable Laws of Mechanicks.

It is ſurpriſing, after the ſolemn Proteſtations Sir *Iſaac* made, that ſuch eminent Men as Mr. *Sorin* and Mr. *de Fontenelle*, ſhould have imputed to this great Philoſopher the verbal and chimerical Way of Reaſoning of the *Ariſtoteleans*; Mr. *Sorin* in the Memoirs of the Academy of 1709, and Mr. *de Fontenelle* in the very Elogium of Sir *Iſaac Newton*.

Moſt of the *French*, the Learned and others, have repeated this Reproach. Theſe are for ever crying out, why did he not imploy the Word *Impulſion*, which is ſo well underſtood, rather than that of *Attraction*, which is unintelligible.

Sir *Iſaac* might have anſwered theſe Criticks thus: Firſt, you have as imperfect an Idea of the Word Impulſion, as of that of Attraction; and in caſe you cannot conceive how one Body tends towards the Center of another Body, neither can you conceive by what Power one Body can impell another.

Secondly, I could not admit of Impulſion; for to do this, I muſt have known that a celeſtial Matter was the Agent; but ſo far from knowing that there is any ſuch Matter, I have proved it to be merely imaginary.

Thirdly,

Thirdly, I uſe the Word Attraction for no other Reaſon, but to expreſs an Effect which I diſcovered in Nature; a certain and indiſputable Effect of an unknown Principle; a Quality inherent in Matter, the Cauſe of which Perſons of greater Abilities than I can pretend to, may, if they can, find out.

What have you then taught us? Will theſe People ſay further? And to what Purpoſe are ſo many Calculations to tell us what you yourſelf do not comprehend?

I have taught you, may Sir *Iſaac* rejoin, that all Bodies gravitate towards one another in proportion to their Quantity of Matter; that theſe central Forces alone, keep the Planets and Comets in their Orbits, and cauſe them to move in the Proportion before ſet down. I demonſtrate to you, that it is impoſſible there ſhould be any other Cauſe which keeps the Planets in their Orbits, than that general Phænomenon of Gravity. For heavy Bodies fall on the Earth according to the Proportion demonſtrated of central Forces; and the Planets finiſhing their Courſe according to theſe ſame Proportions, in caſe there were another Power that acted upon all thoſe Bodies, it would either increaſe their Velocity, or change their Direction

rection. Now not one of thoſe Bodies ever hath a ſingle Degree of Motion or Velocity, or hath any Direction but what is demonſtrated to be the Effect of the central Forces; conſequently it is impoſſible there ſhould be any other Principle.

Give me Leave once more to introduce Sir *Iſaac* ſpeaking: Shall he not be allowed to ſay, my Caſe and that of the Ancients is very different. Theſe ſaw, for Inſtance, Water aſcend in Pumps, and ſaid, the Water riſeth becauſe it abhors a *Vacuum*. But with regard to my ſelf, I am in the Caſe of a Man who ſhould have firſt obſerved that Water aſcends in Pumps, but ſhould leave others to explain the Cauſe of this Effect. The Anatomiſt who firſt declared, that the Motion of the Arm is owing to the Contraction of the Muſcles, taught Mankind an indiſputable Truth; but are they leſs obliged to him becauſe he did not know the Reaſon why the Muſcles contract? The Cauſe of the Elaſticity of the Air is unknown, but he who firſt diſcovered this Spring performed a very ſignal Service to natural Philoſophy. The Spring that I diſcovered was more hidden and more univerſal, and for that very Reaſon Mankind ought to thank me the more. I

have diſcovered a new Property of Matter one of the Secrets of the Creator; and have calculated and diſcovered the Effects of it. After this ſhall People quarrel with me about the Name I give it.

Vortices may be called an occult Quality becauſe their Exiſtence was never proved: Attraction on the contray is a real Thing, becauſe its Effects are demonſtrated, and the Proportions of it are calculated. The Cauſe of this Cauſe is among the *Arcana* of the Almighty.

Procedes huc, & non amplius,

Hither thou ſhalt go, and no farther.

LETTER XVI.

ON

Sir *Iſaac Newton's* OPTICKS.

THE Philoſophers of the laſt Age found out a new Univerſe; and a Circumſtance which made its Diſcovery more difficult, was, that no one had ſo much as ſuſpected its Exiſtence. The moſt Sage and Judicious were of Opinion, that it was a frantic Raſhneſs to dare ſo much as to imagine that it was poſſible to gueſs the Laws by which the celeſtial Bodies move, and the Manner how Light acts. *Galileo* by his aſtronomical Diſcoveries, *Kepler* by his Calculation, *Des Cartes* (at leaſt in his Dioptricks) and Sir *Iſaac Newton* in all his Works, ſeverally ſaw the Mechaniſm of the Springs of the World. The Geometricians have ſubjected

ſubjected Infinity to the Laws of Calculation. The Circulation of the Blood in Animals, and of the Sap in Vegetables, have changed the Face of Nature with regard to us. A new kind of Exiſtence hath been given to Bodies in the Air-Pump. By the Aſſiſtance of Teleſcopes Bodies have been brought nearer to one another. Finally, the ſeveral Diſcoveries which Sir *Iſaac Newton* hath made on Light, are equal to the boldeſt Things which the Curioſity of Man could expect, after ſo many philoſophical Novelties.

Till *Antonio de Dominis*, the Rainbow was conſidered as an inexplicable Miracle. This Philoſopher gueſſed that it was a neceſſary Effect of the Sun and Rain. *Des Cartes* gained immortal Fame, by his mathematical Explication of this ſo natural a Phænomenon. He calculated the Reflections and Refractions of Light in Drops of Rain; and his Sagacity on this Occaſion was at that Time looked upon as next to divine.

But what would he have ſaid had it been proved to him that he was miſtaken in the Nature of Light; that he had not the leaſt Reaſon to maintain that it is a globular Body: That it is falſe to aſſert, that

that this Matter ſpreading it ſelf through the whole, waits only to be projected forward to the Sun, in order to be put in Action, in like Manner as a long Staff acts at one End when puſhed forward by the other. That Light is certainly darted by the Sun; in fine, that Light is tranſmitted from the Sun, to the Earth in about ſeven Minutes, though a Cannon Ball, which were not to loſe any of its Velocity, could not go that Diſtance in leſs than twenty five Years. How great would have been his Aſtoniſhment, had he been told, that Light doth not reflect directly by impinging againſt the Solid Parts of Bodies; that Bodies are not tranſparent when they have large Pores, and that a Man ſhould ariſe, who would demonſtrate all theſe Paradoxes, and anatomize a ſingle Ray of Light with more Dexterity than the ableſt Artiſt diſſects a human Body. This Man is come. Sir *Iſaac Newton* hath demonſtrated to the Eye, by the bare Aſſiſtance of the Priſm, that Light is a Compoſition of coloured Rays, which, being united, form the white Colour. A ſingle Ray is by him divided into ſeven, which all fall upon a Piece of Linnen, or a Sheet of white Paper, in their Order one above the other, and at unequal

Diſtances.

Diſtances. The firſt is Red, the ſecond Orange, the third Yellow, the fourth Green, the fifth Blue, and ſixth Indigo, the ſeventh Violet Purple. Each of theſe Rays tranſmitted afterwards by an hundred other Priſms, will never change the Colour it bears; in like Manner as Gold, when completely purged from its Droſs, will never change afterwards in the Crucible. As a ſuperabundant Proof that each of theſe elementary Rays hath inherently in it ſelf that which form its Colour to the Eye, take a ſmall Piece of yellow Wood for Inſtance, and ſet it in the Ray of a red Colour, this Wood will inſtantly be tinged red; but ſet it in the Ray of a green Colour, it aſſumes a green Colour, and ſo of all the reſt.

From what Cauſe therefore do Colours ariſe in Nature? It is nothing but the Diſpoſition of Bodies to reflect the Rays of a certain Order, and to abſorb all the reſt.

What then is this ſecret Diſpoſition? Sir *Iſaac Newton* demonſtrates, that it is nothing more than the Denſity of the ſmall conſtituent Particles of which a Body is compoſed. And how is this Reflection performed? It was ſuppoſed to ariſe from the Rebounding of the Rays,

in the ſame Manner as a Ball on the Surface of a ſolid Body; but this is a Miſtake, for Sir *Iſaac* taught the aſtoniſhed Philoſophers, that Bodies are opake for no other Reaſon, but becauſe their Pores are large; that Light reflects on our Eyes from the very Boſom of thoſe Pores; that the ſmaller the Pores of a Body are, the more ſuch a Body is tranſparent. Thus Paper which reflects the Light when dry, tranſmits it when oiled, becauſe the Oil, by filling its Pores, makes them much ſmaller.

It is there that examining the vaſt Poroſity of Bodies, every Particle having its Pores, and every Particle of thoſe Particles having its own; he ſhews we are not certain that there is a cubic Inch of ſolid Matter in the Univerſe, ſo far are we from conceiving what Matter is. Having thus divided, as it were, Light into its Elements, and carried the Sagacity of his Diſcoveries ſo far, as to prove the Method of diſtinguiſhing compound Colours from ſuch as are primitive; he ſhews, that theſe elementary Rays ſeparated by the Priſm, are ranged in their Order for no other Reaſon but becauſe they are refracted in that very Order; and it is this Property (unknown till he diſcovered it) of breaking

or ſplitting in this Proportion; it is this unequal Refraction of Rays, this Power of refracting the Red leſs than the Orange Colour, *&c.* which he calls the different Refrangibility. The moſt reflexible Rays are the moſt refrangible, and from hence he evinces that the ſame Power is the Cauſe both of the Reflection and Refraction of Light.

But all theſe Wonders are meerly but the Opening of his Diſcoveries. He found out the Secret to ſee the Vibrations or Fits of Light, which come and go inceſſantly, and which either tranſmit Light or reflect it according to the Denſity of the Parts they meet with. He hath preſumed to calculate the Denſity of the Particles of Air neceſſary between two Glaſſes, the one flat, the other convex on one Side, ſet one upon the other; in order to operate ſuch a Tranſmiſſion or Reflection, or to form ſuch and ſuch a Colour.

From all theſe Combinations he diſcovers the Proportion in which Light acts on Bodies, and Bodies act on Light.

He ſaw Light ſo perfectly, that he hath determined to what Degree of Perfection the Art of increaſing it, and of aſſiſting our Eyes by Teleſcopes can be carried.

Des

Des Cartes, from a noble Confidence, that was very excuſable conſidering how ſtrongly he was fired at the firſt Diſcoveries he made in an Art which he almoſt firſt found out; *Des Cartes*, I ſay, hoped to diſcover in the Stars, by the Aſſiſtance of Teleſcopes, Objects as ſmall as thoſe we diſcern upon the Earth.

But Sir *Iſaac* hath ſhewn, that Dioptric Teleſcopes cannot be brought to a greater Perfection; becauſe of that Refraction, and of that very Refrangibility, which at the ſame Time that they bring Objects nearer to us, ſcatter too much the elementary Rays; he hath calculated in theſe Glaſſes the Proportion of the ſcattering of the Red and of the Blue Rays; and proceeding ſo far as to demonſtrate Things which were not ſuppoſed even to exiſt, he examines the Inequalities which ariſe from the Shape or Figure of the Glaſs, and that which ariſeth from the Refrangibility. He finds, that the object Glaſs of the Teleſcope being convex on one Side and flat on the other, in caſe the flat Side be turned towards the Object, the Error which ariſes from the Conſtruction and Poſition of the Glaſs, is above five thouſand Times leſs than the Error which ariſes from the Refrangibility:

gibility: And therefore, that the Shape or Figure of the Glaſſes is not the Cauſe why Teleſcopes cannot be carried to a greater Perfection, but ariſes wholly from the Nature of Light.

For this Reaſon he invented a Teleſcope, which diſcovers Objects by Reflection and not by Refraction. Teleſcopes of this new kind are very hard to make, and their Uſe is not eaſy. But according to the *Engliſh*, a reflective Teleſcope of but five Feet, has the ſame Effect as another of an hundred Feet in length.

LETTER XVII.

ON

INFINITES in GEOMETRY.

AND

Sir *Iſaac Newton*'s

CHRONOLOGY.

THE Labyrinth and Abyſs of Infinity, is alſo a new Courſe Sir *Iſaac Newton* hath gone through, and we are obliged to him for the Clue by whoſe Aſſiſtance we are enabled to trace its various Windings.

Des Cartes got the Start of him alſo in this aſtoniſhing Invention. He advanced with mighty Steps in his Geometry, and was arrived at the very Borders of Infinity, but went no farther.

Dr.

Dr. *Wallis*, about the Middle of the laſt Century, was the firſt who reduced a Fraction by a perpetual Diviſion to an infinite Series.

The Lord *Brounker* employed this Series to ſquare the Hyperbola.

Mercator publiſhed a Demonſtration of this Quadrature, much about which Time, Sir *Iſaac Newton* being then twenty three Years of Age, had invented a general Method to perform, on all geometrical Curves, what had juſt before been tryed on the Hyperbola.

It is to this Method of ſubjecting every where Infinity to algebraical Calculations, that the Name is given of differential Calculations or of Fluxions, and integral Calculation. It is the Art of numbring and meaſuring exactly a Thing whoſe Exiſtance cannot be conceived.

And, indeed, would you not imagine that a Man laughed at you, who ſhould declare that there are Lines infinitely great which form an Angle infinitely little?

That a right Line, which is a right Line ſo long as it is finite, by changing infinitely little its Direction, becomes an infinite Curve; and that a Curve may become infinitely leſs than another Curve,

That there are infinite Squares, infinite Cubes; and Infinite of Infinites all greater than one another, and the laſt but one of which, is nothing in Compariſon of the laſt?

All theſe Things which at firſt appear to be the utmoſt Exceſs of Frenzy, are in reality an Effort of the Subtilty and Extent of the human Mind, and the Art of finding Truths which till then had been unknown.

This ſo bold Edifice is even founded on ſimple Ideas. The Buſineſs is to meaſure the Diagonal of a Square, to give the Area of a Curve, to find the ſquare Root of a Number, which hath none in common Arithmetic. After all, the Imagination ought not to be ſtartled any more at ſo many Orders of Infinites, than at the ſo well known Propoſition, *viz.* that Curve Lines may always be made to paſs between a Circle and a Tangent; or at that other, namely that Matter is diviſible in *infinitum*. Theſe two Truths have been demonſtrated many Years, and are no leſs incomprehenſible than the Things we have been ſpeaking of.

For many Years the Invention of this famous Calculation was denied Sir *Iſaac Newton*. In *Germany* Mr. *Leibnitz* was conſidered

conſidered as the Inventor of the Differences or Moments, called * *Fluxions*, and Mr. *Bernoulli* claimed the integral Calculation. However, Sir *Iſaac* is now thought to have firſt made the Diſcovery, and the other two have the Glory of having once made the World doubt whether it was to be aſcribed to him or them. Thus ſome conteſted with Dr. *Harvey* the Invention of the Circulation of the Blood, as others diſputed with Mr. *Perrault* that of the Circulation of the Sap.

Hartſocker and *Lewenhoeck* diſputed with each other the Honour of having firſt ſeen the *Vermiculi* of which Mankind are formed. This *Hartſocker* alſo conteſted with *Huygens* the Invention of a new Method of calculating the Diſtance of a fixed Star. It is not yet known to what Philoſopher we owe the Invention of the Cycloid.

Be this as it will, it is by the Help of Geometry of Infinites that Sir *Iſaac Newton* attained to the moſt ſublime Diſcoveries. I am now to ſpeak of another Work, which although more adapted to the Capacity of the human Mind, doth nevertheleſs diſplay ſome Marks of that

* By Sir *Iſaac Newton*.

creative Genius with which Sir *Iſaac Newton* was informed in all his Reſearches. The Work I mean is a Chronology of a new kind, for what Province ſoever he undertook, he was ſure to change the Ideas and Opinions received by the reſt of Men.

Accuſtomed to unravel and diſintangle Chaos's, he was reſolved to convey at leaſt ſome light into that of the Fables of Antiquity, which are blended and confounded with Hiſtory, and fix an uncertain Chronology. It is true, that there is no Family, City or Nation, but endeavours to remove its Original as far backward as poſſible. Beſides, the firſt Hiſtorians were the moſt negligent in ſetting down the Æra's; Books were infinitely leſs common than they are at this Time, and conſequently Authors being not ſo obnoxious to Cenſure, they therefore impoſed upon the World with greater Impunity; and as it is evident that theſe have related a great Number of fictitious Particulars, it is probable enough that they alſo gave us ſeveral falſe Æra's.

It appeared in general to Sir *Iſaac*, that the World was five hundred Years younger than Chronologers declare it to be. He grounds his Opinion on the ordinary

Courſe

Courſe of Nature, and on the Obſervations which Aſtronomers have made.

By the Courſe of Nature we here underſtand the Time that every Generation of Men lives upon the Earth. The *Egyptians* firſt employed this Vague and uncertain Method of calculating, when they began to write the Beginning of their Hiſtory. Theſe computed three hundred and forty one Generations from *Menes* to *Sethon*; and having no fixed Æra, they ſuppoſed three Generations to conſiſt of an hundred Years. In this Manner they computed eleven thouſand three hundred and forty Years from *Menes*'s Reign to that of *Sethon*.

The *Greeks* before they counted by Olympiads, followed the Method of the *Egyptians*, and even gave a little more Extent to Generations, making each to conſiſt of forty Years.

Now here both the *Egyptians* and the *Greeks* made an erroneous Computation. It is true indeed, that according to the uſual Courſe of Nature three Generations laſt about an hundred and twenty Years: But three Reigns are far from taking up ſo many. It is very evident, that Mankind in general live longer than Kings are found to reign: So that an Author who

ſhould write a Hiſtory, in which there were no Dates fixed, and ſhould know that nine Kings had reigned over a Nation; ſuch an Hiſtorian, would commit a great Error ſhould he allow three hundred Years to theſe nine Monarchs. Every Generation takes about thirty ſix Years; every Reign is, one with the other, about twenty. Thirty Kings of *England* have ſwayed the Scepter from *William* the Conqueror to *George* the 1ſt. the Years of whoſe Reigns added together, amount to ſix hundred and forty eight Years, which being divided equally among the thirty Kings, give to every one a Reign of very near twenty one Years and a half. Sixty three Kings of *France* have ſat upon the Throne; theſe have, one with another, reigned about twenty Years each. This is the uſual Courſe of Nature: The Ancients therefore were miſtaken, when they ſuppoſed the Durations in General, of Reigns, to equal that of Generations. They therefore allowed too great a Number of Years, and conſequently ſome Years muſt be ſubſtracted from their Computation.

Aſtronomical Obſervations ſeem to have lent a ſtill greater Aſſiſtance to our Philoſopher,

loſopher. He appears to us ſtronger when he fights upon his own Ground.

You know that the Earth, beſides its annual Motion which carries it round the Sun from Weſt to Eaſt in the Space of a Year, hath alſo a ſingular Revolution which was quite unknown till within theſe late Years. It's Poles have a very ſlow retrograde Motion from Eaſt to Weſt, whence it happens that their Poſition every Day doth not correſpond exactly with the ſame Point of the Heavens. This Difference which is ſo inſenſible in a Year, becomes pretty conſiderable in Time; and in threeſcore and twelve Years the Difference is found to be of one Degree, that is to ſay, the three hundred and ſixtieth Part of the Circumference of the whole Heaven. Thus after ſeventy two Years the *Colure* of the vernal Equinox which paſſed through a fixed Star, correſponds with another fixed Star. Hence it is, that the Sun, inſtead of being in that Part of the Heavens in which the *Ram* was ſituated in the Time of *Hipparchus*, is found to correſpond with that Part of the Heavens in which the *Bull* was ſituated; and the *Twins* are placed where the *Bull* then ſtood. All the Signs have changed their Situation, and yet we

ſtill

ſtill retain the ſame Manner of ſpeaking as the Ancients did. In this Age we ſay that the Sun is in the *Ram* in the Spring, from the ſame Principle of Condeſcenſion that we ſay that the Sun turns round.

Hipparchus was the firſt among the *Greeks* who obſerved ſome Change in the Conſtellations with regard to the Equinoxes, or rather who learned it from the *Egyptians*. Philoſophers aſcribed this Motion to the Stars; for in thoſe Ages People were far from imagining ſuch a Revolution in the Earth, which was ſuppoſed to be immoveable in every reſpect. They therefore created a Heaven in which they fixed the ſeveral Stars, and gave this Heaven a particular Motion by which it was carried towards the Eaſt, whilſt that all the Stars ſeemed to perform their diurnal Revolution from Eaſt to Weſt. To this Error they added a ſecond of much greater Conſequence, by imagining that the pretended Heaven of the fixed Stars advanced one Degree eaſtward every hundred Years. In this Manner they were no leſs miſtaken in their aſtronomical Calculation than in their Syſtem of Natural Philoſophy. As for Inſtance, an Aſtronomer in that Age would have ſaid, that

the

the Vernal Equinox was in the Time of ſuch and ſuch an Obſervation, in ſuch a Sign, and in ſuch a Star. It hath advanced two Degrees of each ſince the Time that Obſervation was made to the preſent. Now two Degrees are equivalent to two hundred Years; conſequently the Aſtronomer who made that Obſervation lived juſt ſo many Years before me. It is certain, that an Aſtronomer who had argued in this Manner would have miſtook juſt fifty four Years; hence it is that the Ancients, who were doubly deceived, made their great Year of the World, that is, the Revolution of the whole Heavens, to conſiſt of thirty ſix thouſand Years. But the Moderns are ſenſible that this imaginary Revolution of the Heaven of the Stars, is nothing elſe than the Revolution of the Poles of the Earth, which is performed in twenty five thouſand nine hundred Years. It may be proper to obſerve tranſiently in this Place, that Sir *Iſaac*, by determining the Figure of the Earth, hath very happily explained the Cauſe of this Revolution.

All this being laid down, the only thing remaining to ſettle Chronology, is to ſee through what Star, the *Colure* of the Equinox paſſeth, and where it interſects at

this Time the Ecliptic in the Spring; and to discover whether some ancient Writer doth not tell us in what Point the Ecliptic was intersected in his Time, by the same *Colure* of the Equinoxes.

Clemens Alexandrinus informs us, that *Chiron*, who went with the *Argonauts*, observed the Constellations at the Time of that famous Expedition, and fixed the vernal Equinox to the Middle of the *Ram*; the autumnal Equinox to the Middle of *Libra*; our Summer Solstice to the Middle of *Cancer*, and our Winter Solstice to the Middle of *Capricorn*.

A long time after the Expedition of the *Argonauts*, and a Year before the *Peloponnesian* War, *Methon* observed that the Point of the Summer Solstice passed through the eighth Degree of *Cancer*.

Now every Sign of the Zodiack contains thirty Degrees. In *Chiron*'s Time, the Solstice was arrived at the Middle of the Sign, that is to say, to the fifteenth Degree. A Year before the *Peloponnesian* War it was at the eighth, and therefore it had retarded seven Degrees. A Degree is equivalent to seventy two Years; consequently, from the Beginning of the *Peloponnesian* War to the Expedition of the *Argonauts*, there is no more than

an Interval of ſeven times ſeventy two Years, which make five hundred and four Years, and not ſeven hundred Years, as the *Greeks* computed. Thus in comparing the Poſition of the Heavens at this Time, with their Poſition in that Age, we find that the Expedition of the *Argonauts* ought to be placed about nine hundred Years before *Chriſt*, and not about fourteen hundred; and conſequently that the World is not ſo old by five hundred Years as it was generally ſuppoſed to be. By this Calculation all the Æra's are drawn nearer, and the ſeveral Events are found to have happened later than is computed. I do not know whether this ingenious Syſtem will be favourably received; and whether theſe Notions will prevail ſo far with the Learned, as to prompt them to reform the Chronology of the World. Perhaps theſe Gentlemen would think it too great a Condeſcenſion, to allow one and the ſame Man the Glory of having improved natural Philoſophy, Geometry and Hiſtory. This would be a kind of univerſal Monarchy, which the Principle of Self Love that is in Man, will ſcarce ſuffer him to indulge his Fellow-Creature; and, indeed, at the ſame Time that ſome very great Philoſophers

attacked

attacked Sir *Iſaac Newton*'s attractive Principle, others fell upon his Chronological Syſtem. Time that ſhould diſcover to which of theſe the Victory is due, may perhaps only leave the Diſpute ſtill more undetermined.

LETTER XVIII.

ON

TRAGEDY.

THE *Engliſh* as well as the *Spaniards* were poſſeſſed of Theatres, at a Time when the *French* had no more than moving, itinerant Stages. *Shakeſpear*, who was conſidered as the *Cornellie* of the firſt mentioned Nation, was pretty near Cotemporary with *Lopez de Vega*, and he created, as it were, the *Engliſh* Theatre. *Shakeſpear* boaſted a ſtrong, fruitful Genius: He was natural and ſublime, but had not ſo much as a ſingle Spark of good Taſte, or knew one Rule of the Drama. I will now hazard

a random, but, at the ſame Time, true Reflection, which is, that the great Merit of this Dramatic Poet hath been the Ruin of the *Engliſh* Stage. There are ſuch beautiful, ſuch noble, ſuch dreadful Scenes in this Writer's monſtrous Farces, to which the Name of Tragedy is given, that they have always been exhibited with great Succeſs. Time, which only gives Reputation to Writers, at laſt makes their very Faults venerable. Moſt of the whimſical, gigantic Images of this Poet, have, through Length of Time (it being an hundred and fifty Years ſince they were firſt drawn) acquired a Right of paſſing for ſublime. Moſt of the modern dramatic Writers have copied him; but the Touches and Deſcriptions which are applauded in *Shakeſpear*, are hiſſed at in theſe Writers; and you will eaſily believe that the Veneration in which this Author is held, increaſeth in Proportion to the Contempt which is ſhewn to the Moderns. Dramatic Writers do not conſider that they ſhould not imitate him; and the ill Succeſs of *Shakeſpear*'s Imitators, produces no other Effect, than to make him be conſidered as inimitable. You remember that in the Tragedy of *Othello Moor* of *Venice*, (a moſt tender Piece) a Man ſtrangles his Wife on the

the Stage; and that the poor Woman, whilſt ſhe is ſtrangling, cries aloud, that ſhe dies very unjuſtly. You know that in *Hamlet* Prince of *Denmark*, two Grave-Diggers make a Grave, and are all the Time drinking, ſinging Ballads, and making humorous Reflections, (natural indeed enough to Perſons of their Profeſſion) on the ſeveral Skulls they throw up with their Spades; but a Circumſtance which will ſurprize you is, that this ridiculous Incident hath been imitated. In the Reign of King *Charles* the Second, which was that of Politeneſs, and the Golden Age of the Liberal Arts; *Otway*, in his *Venice Preſerved*, introduces *Antonio* the Senator, and *Naki* his Curtezan, in the Midſt of the Horrors of the Marquis of *Bedemar*'s Conſpiracy. *Antonio*, the ſuperannuated Senator, plays, in his Miſtreſs's Preſence, all the apiſh Tricks of a lewd, impotent Debauchee who is quite frantic and out of his Senſes. He mimicks a Bull and a Dog; and bites his Miſtreſs's Legs, who kicks and whips him. However, the Players have ſtruck theſe Buffooneries (which indeed were calculated merely for the Dregs of the People) out of *Otway*'s Tragedy; but they have ſtill left

left in *Shakeſpear's Julius Cæſar*, the Jokes of the *Roman* Shoemakers and Coblers, who are introduced in the ſame Scene with *Brutus* and *Caſſius*. You will undoubtedly complain, that thoſe who have hitherto diſcourſed with you on the *Engliſh* Stage, and eſpecially on the celebrated *Shakeſpear*, have taken Notice only of his Errors; and that no one has tranſlated any of thoſe ſtrong, thoſe forcible Paſſages which attone for all his Faults. But to this I will anſwer, that nothing is eaſier than to exhibit in Proſe all the ſilly Impertinencies which a Poet may have thrown out; but that it is a very difficult Task to tranſlate his fine Verſes. All your junior academical *Sophs*, who ſet up for Cenſors of the eminent Writers, compile whole Volumes; but methinks two Pages which diſplay ſome of the Beauties of great Genius's, are of infinitely more Value than all the idle Rhapſodies of thoſe Commentators; and I will join in Opinion with all Perſons of good Taſte in declaring, that greater Advantage may be reaped from a Dozen Verſes of *Homer* or *Virgil*, than from all the Criticiſms put together which have been made on thoſe two great Poets.

I have ventured to tranſlate ſome Paſſages of the moſt celebrated *Engliſh* Poets, and ſhall now give you one from *Shakeſpear*. Pardon the Blemiſhes of the Tranſlation for the Sake of the Original; and remember always that when you ſee a Verſion, you ſee merely a faint Print of a beautiful Picture. I have made Choice of Part of the celebrated Soliloquy in *Hamlet*, which you may remember is as follows.

To be, or not to be! that is the Queſtion!
Whether it is nobler in the Mind to ſuffer
The Stings and Arrows of outrageous Fortune,
Or to take Arms againſt a Sea of Troubles,
And by oppoſing, end them? To dye! to ſleep!
No more! and by a Sleep to ſay we end
The Heart-ach, and the thouſand natural Shocks
That Fleſh is Heir to! It is a Conſummation
Devoutly to be wiſhed. To die! to ſleep!
To ſleep, perchance to dream! Ay, there is the Rub;
For in that Sleep of Death, what Dreams may come
When we have ſhuffled off this mortal Coyle,

Muſt

Muſt give us Pauſe. There's the Reſpect
That makes Calamity of ſo long Life:
For who would bear the Whips and Scorns of Time,
Tho' Oppreſſor's Wrong, the poor Man's contumely,
The Pangs of deſpis'd Love, the Laws Delay,
The Inſolence of Office, and the Spurns
That patient Merit of th' unworthy takes,
When he himſelf might his Quietus make
With a bare Bodkin? Who would theſe Fardles bear
To groan and ſweat under a weary Life,
But that the Dread of ſomething after Death,
The undiſcover'd Country, from whoſe Bourn
No Traveller returns, puzzles the Will,
And makes us rather bear thoſe ills we have,
Than fly to others that we know not of?
Thus Conſcience does make Cowards of us all;
And thus the native Hue of Reſolution
Is ſick'd over with the pale Caſt of Thought:
And Enterprizes of great Weight and Moment
With this Regard their Currents turn away,
And loſe the Name of Action ——

My Verſion of it runs thus:

Demeure, il faut choiſir & paſſer à l'inſtant
De la vie, à la mort, ou de l'Etre au neant.
Dieux cruels, s'il en eſt, éclairez mon courage,
Faut il vieillir courbé ſous la main qui m'outrage,
Supporter, ou finir mon malheur & mon ſort?
Qui ſuis je? Qui m'arrete! & qu'eſtce que la Mort?
C'eſt la fin de nos maux, c'eſt mon unique Azile
Aprés de long tranſports, c'eſt un ſommeil tranquile.
On s'endort, & tout meurt, mais un affreux reveil
Doit ſucceder peut etre aux douceurs du ſommeil!
On nous menace, on dit que cette courte Vie,
De tourmens éternels eſt auſſi-tôt ſuivie.
O Mort! moment fatal! affreuſe Eternité!
Tour cœur à ton ſeul nom ſe glace épouvanté.
Eh! qui pourroit ſans Toi ſupporter cette vie,
De nos Prétres menteurs benir l'hypocriſie;

D'une

D'une indigne Maitreſſe encenſer les erreurs,
Ramper ſous un Miniſtre, adorer ſes hauteurs;
Et montrer les langueurs de ſon ame abattüe,
A des Amis ingrats qui detournent la vüe?
La Mort ſeroit trob douce en ces extrémitez;
Mais le ſcrupule parle, & nous crie, Arrêtez;
Il defend à nos mains cet heureux homicide
Et d'un Heros guerrier, fait un Chrétien timide, &c.

Do not imagine that I have tranſlated *Shakeſpear* in a ſervile Manner. Woe to the Writer who gives a literal Verſion; who by rendring every Word of his Original, by that very means enervates the Senſe, and extinguiſhes all the Fire of it. It is on ſuch an Occaſion one may juſtly affirm, that the Letter kills, but the Spirit quickens.

Here follows another Paſſage copied from a celebrated Tragic Writer among the *Engliſh*. It is *Dryden*, a Poet in the Reign of *Charles* the Second; a Writer whoſe Genius was too exuberant, and not accompanied with Judgment enough. Had he writ only the tenth Part of the Works

he

he left behind him, his Character would have been conſpicuous in every Part; but his great Fault is his having endeavoured to be univerſal.

The Paſſage in Queſtion is as follows:

When I conſider Life, it is all a Cheat,
Yet fool'd by Hope, Men favour the Deceit;
Truſt on and think, to Morrow will repay;
To Morrow is falſer than the former Day;
Lies more; and whilſt it ſays we ſhall be bleſt
With ſome new Joy cuts off what we poſſeſt;
Strange Cozenage! none would live paſt Years again,
Yet all hope Pleaſure in what yet remain,
And from the Dregs of Life think to receive
What the firſt ſprightly Running could not give.
I'm tir'd with waiting for this chymic Gold,
Which fools us young, and beggars us when old.

I ſhall now give you my Tranſlation.

De deſſeins en regrets & d'erreurs en deſirs
Les Mortels inſenſés promenent leur Folie.
Dans des malheurs preſents, dans l'eſpoir des plaiſirs.

Nous

Nous ne vivons jamais, nous attendons la vie.
Demain, demain, dit on, va combler tous nos vœux.
Demain vient, & nous laiſſe encore plus malheureux.
Qu'elle eſt l'erreur, helas! du ſoin qui nous dévore,
Nul de nous ne voudroit recommencer ſon cours.
De nos premiers momens nous maudiſſons l'aurore.
Et de la nuit qui vient, nous attendons encore
Ce qu'ont en vain promis les plus beaux de nos jours, &c,

It is in theſe detached Paſſages that the *Engliſh* have hitherto excelled. Their dramatick Pieces, moſt of which are barbarous and without Decorum, Order or Veriſimilitude, dart ſuch reſplendent Flaſhes, through this Gloom, as amaze and aſtoniſh. The Style is too much inflated, too unnatural, too cloſely copied from the *Hebrew* Writers, who abound ſo much with the *Aſiatic* Fuſtian. But then it muſt be alſo confeſſed, that the *Stilts* of the figurative Style on which the *Engliſh* Tongue is lifted up, raiſes the Genius at the

the ſame Time very far aloft, though with an irregular Pace. The firſt *Engliſh* Writer who compoſed a regular Tragedy and infuſed a Spirit of Elegance through every Part of it, was the illuſtrious Mr. *Addiſon*. His *Cato* is a Maſter-piece both with regard to the Diction, and to the Beauty and Harmony of the Numbers. The Character of *Cato* is, in my Opinion vaſtly ſuperior to that of *Corneille* in the *Pompey* of *Corneille*: For *Cato* is great without any Thing like Fuſtian, and *Cornelia*, who beſides is not a neceſſary Character, tends ſometimes to Bombaſt. Mr. *Addiſon*'s *Cato* appears to me the greateſt Character that was ever brought upon any Stage, but then the reſt of them do not correſpond to the Dignity of it: And this dramatic Piece ſo excellently well writ, is diſfigured by a dull Love-Plot, which ſpreads a certain Languor over the whole, that quite murders it.

The Cuſtom of introducing Love at random and at any rate in the Drama, paſſed from *Paris* to *London* about 1660, with our Ribbons and our Peruques. The Ladies who adorn the Theatrical Circle, there, in like Manner as in this City, will ſuffer Love only to be the Theme of every Converſation. The judicious Mr. *Addiſon*

ſon had the effeminate Complaiſance to ſoften the Severity of his dramatic Character ſo, as to adapt it to the Manners of the Age; and from an Endeavour to pleaſe, quite ruined a Maſter-Piece in its kind. Since his Time, the Drama is become more regular, the Audience more difficult to be pleaſed, and Writers more correct and leſs bold. I have ſeen ſome new Pieces that were written with great Regularity, but which at the ſame Time were very flat and inſipid. One would think that the *Engliſh* had been hitherto formed to produce irregular Beauties only. The ſhining Monſters of *Shakeſpear*, give infinite more Delight than the judicious Images of the Moderns. Hitherto the poetical Genius of the *Engliſh* reſembles a tufted Tree planted by the Hand of Nature, that throws out a thouſand Branches at random, and ſpreads unequally, but with great Vigour. It dies if you attempt to force its Nature, and to lop and dreſs it in the ſame Manner as the Trees of the Garden of *Marli*.

LETTER XIX.

ON

COMEDY.

I AM ſurprized that the judicious and ingenious Mr *de Muralt*, who hath publiſhed ſome Letters on the *Engliſh* and *French* Nations, ſhould have confined himſelf, in treating of Comedy, merely to cenſure *Shadwell* the comic Writer. This Author was had in pretty great Contempt in Mr. *de Muralt*'s Time, and was not the Poet of the polite Part of the Nation. His dramatick Pieces which pleaſed ſome time in acting, where deſpiſed by all Perſons of Taſte, and might be compared to many Places which I have ſeen in *France*, that drew Crowds to the Play houſe, at the ſame Time that the whole City of *Paris* exploded them, and yet all flocked to ſee them repreſented on the Stage. Methinks Mr. *de Muralt* ſhould have mentioned an excellent comic Writer (living when he was in *England*) I mean Mr. *Wycherley*,

ley, who was a long Time known publickly to be happy in the good Graces of the moſt celebrated Miſtreſs of King *Charles* the Second. This Gentleman who paſſed his Life among Perſons of the higheſt Diſtinction, was perfectly well acquainted with their Lives and their Follies, and painted them with the ſtrongeſt Pencil, and in the trueſt Colours. He hath drawn a *Miſantrope* or Man-hater, in Imitation of that of *Moliere*. All *Wycherley*'s Strokes are ſtronger and bolder than thoſe of our *Miſantrope*, but then they are leſs delicate, and the Rules of Decorum are not ſo well obſerved in this Play. The *Engliſh* Writer hath corrected the only Defect that is in *Moliere*'s Comedy, the Thinneſs of the Plot, which alſo is ſo diſpoſed that the Characters in it do not enough raiſe our Concern. The *Engliſh* Comedy affects us, and the Contrivance of the Plot is very ingenious, but at the ſame Time it is too bold for the *French* Manners. The Fable is this. —— A Captain of a Man of War, who is very brave, open-hearted, and enflamed with a Spirit of Contempt for all Mankind, hath a prudent, ſincere Friend whom he yet is ſuſpicious of, and a Miſtreſs that loves him with the utmoſt Exceſs of

Paſſion,

Paſſion. The Captain, ſo far from returning her Love, will not even condeſcend to look upon her; but confides intirely in a falſe Friend, who is the moſt worthleſs Wretch living. At the ſame Time he hath given his Heart to a Creature who is the greateſt Coquet, and the moſt perfidious of her Sex, and is ſo credulous as to be confident ſhe is a *Penelope*; and his falſe Friend a *Cato*. He embarks on board his Ship in order to go and fight the *Dutch*, having left all his Money, his Jewels and every Thing he had in the World to this virtuous Creature, whom at the ſame Time he recommends to the Care of his ſuppoſed faithful Friend. Nevertheleſs the real Man of Honour whom he ſuſpects ſo unaccountably, goes on board the Ship with him; and the Miſtreſs on whom he would not beſtow ſo much as one Glance, diſguiſes herſelf in the Habit of a Page, and is with him the whole Voyage, without his once knowing that ſhe is of a Sex different from that ſhe attempts to paſs for, which, by the Way, is not over natural.

The Captain having blown up his own Ship in an Engagement, returns to *England* abandoned and undone, accompanied by

by his Page and his Friend, without knowing the Friendſhip of the one, or the tender Paſſion of the other. Immediately he goes to the Jewel among Women, who he expected had preſerved her Fidelity to him, and the Treaſure he had left in her Hands. He meets with her indeed, but married to the honeſt Knave in whom he had repoſed ſo much Confidence; and finds ſhe had acted as treacherouſly with regard to the Casket he had entruſted her with. The Captain can ſcarce think it poſſible, that a Woman of Virtue and Honour can act ſo vile a Part; but to convince him ſtill more of the Reality of it, this very worthy Lady falls in Love with the little Page, and will force him to her Embraces. But as it is requiſite Juſtice ſhould be done, and that in a dramatick Piece Virtue ought to be rewarded and Vice puniſhed; it is at laſt found that the Captain takes his Page's Place, and lyes with his faithleſs Miſtreſs, cuckolds his treacherous Friend, thruſts his Sword through his Body, recovers his Casket and marries his Page. You will obſerve that this Play is alſo larded with a petulant, litigious old Woman (a Relation of the Captain) who is the moſt comical

mical Character that was ever brought upon the Stage.

Wycherley hath alſo copied from *Moliere* another Play, of as ſingular and bold a Caſt, which is a kind of *Ecole des Femmes*, or, *School for married Women.*

The principal Character in this Comedy is one *Horner*, a ſly Fortune-Hunter, and the Terror of all the City Huſbands. This Fellow in order to play a ſurer Game, cauſeth a Report to be ſpread, that in his laſt Illneſs, the Surgeons had found it neceſſary to have him made an Eunuch. Upon his appearing in this noble Character, all the Husbands in Town flock to him with their Wives, and now poor *Horner* is only puzzled about his Choice. However, he gives the Preference particularly to a little female Peaſant; a very harmleſs, innocent Creature, who enjoys a fine Fluſh of Health, and cuckolds her Husband with a Simplicity that hath infinitely more Merit than the witty Malice of the moſt experienced Ladies. This Play cannot indeed be called the School of good Morals, but it is certainly the School of Wit and true Humour.

Sir *John Vanbrugh* hath writ ſeveral Comedies which are more humorous than thoſe

thoſe of Mr. *Wycherly*, but not ſo ingenious. Sir *John* was a Man of Pleaſure, and likewiſe a Poet and an Architect. The general Opinion is, that he is as ſprightly in his Writings as he is heavy in his Buildings. It is he who raiſed the famous Caſtle of *Blenheim*, a ponderous and laſting Monument of our unfortunate Battle of *Hockſtet*. Were the Apartments but as ſpacious as the Walls are thick, this Caſtle would be commodious enough. Some Wag, in an Epiraph he made on Sir *John Vanbrugh*, has theſe Lines:

Earth lye light on him, for he
Laid many a heavy Load on thee.

Sir *John* having taken a Tour into *France* before the glorious War that broke out in 1701, was thrown into the *Baſtile*, and detained there for ſome Time, without being ever able to diſcover the Motive which had prompted our Miniſtry to indulge him this Mark of their Diſtinction. He writ a Comedy during his Confinement; and a Circumſtance which appears to me very extraordinary is, that we do not meet with ſo much as a ſingle ſatyrical Stroke againſt the Country in which

which he hath been ſo injuriouſly treated.

The late Mr. *Congreve* raiſed the Glory of Comedy to a greater Height than any *Engliſh* Writer before or ſince his Time. He wrote only a few Plays, but they are all excellent in their kind. The Laws of the Drama are ſtrictly obſerved in them; they abound with Characters all which are ſhadowed with the utmoſt Delicacy, and we do not meet with ſo much as one low, or coarſe Jeſt. The Language is every where that of Men of Honour, but their Actions are thoſe of Knaves; a Proof that he was perfectly well acquainted with human Nature, and frequented what we call polite Company. He was infirm, and come to the Verge of Life when I knew him. Mr. *Congreve* had one Defect, which was, his entertaining too mean an Idea of his firſt Profeſſion, (that of a Writer) although it was to this he owed his Fame and Fortune. He ſpoke of his Works as of Trifles that were beneath him; and hinted to me in our firſt Converſation, that I ſhould viſit him upon no other Foot than that of a Gentleman, who led a Life of Plainneſs and Simplicity. I anſwered, that had he been ſo unfortunate as to be a mere Gentleman I ſhould never

never have come to ſee him; and I was very much diſguſted at ſo unſeaſonable a Piece of Vanity.

Mr. *Congreve*'s Comedies are the moſt witty and regular, thoſe of Sir *John Vanbrugh* moſt gay and humorous, and thoſe of Mr. *Wycherley* have the greateſt Force and Spirit. It may be proper to obſerve, that theſe fine Genius's never ſpoke diſadvantageouſly of *Moliere*; and that none but the contemptible Writers among the *Engliſh* have endeavoured to leſſen the Character of that great comic Poet. Such *Italian* Muſicians as deſpiſe *Lully* are themſelves Perſons of no Character or Ability; but a *Buononcini* eſteems that great Artiſt, and does Juſtice to his Merit.

The *Engliſh* have ſome other good comic Writers living, ſuch as Sir *Richard Steel*, and Mr. *Cibber*, who is an excellent Player, and alſo Poet Laureat, a Title which how ridiculous ſoever it may be thought, is yet worth a thouſand Crowns a Year, (beſides ſome conſiderable Privileges) to the Perſon who enjoys it. Our illuſtrious *Corneille* had not ſo much.

To conclude. Do not deſire me to deſcend to Particulars with regard to theſe *Engliſh* Comedies, which I am ſo fond of applauding; nor to give you a ſingle ſmart

Saying; or humorous Stroke from *Wycherley* or *Congreve*. We do not laugh in reading a Tranſlation. If you have a Mind to underſtand the *Engliſh* Comedy, the only way to do this will be for you to go to *England*, to ſpend three Years in *London*, to make your ſelf Maſter of the *Engliſh* Tongue, and to frequent the Play-Houſe every Night. I receive but little Pleaſure from the Peruſal of *Ariſtophanes* and *Plautus*, and for this Reaſon, becauſe I am neither a *Greek* nor a *Roman*. The Delicacy of the Humour, the Alluſion, the à *propos*, all theſe are loſt to a Foreigner.

But it is different with reſpect to Tragedy, this treating only of exalted Paſſions and heroical Follies, which the antiquated Errors of Fable or Hiſtory have made ſacred. *Oedipus*, *Electra*, and ſuch like Characters, may with as much Propriety, be treated of by the *Spaniards*, the *Engliſh*, or Us, as by the *Greeks*: But true Comedy is the ſpeaking Picture of the Follies and ridiculous Foibles of a Nation; ſo that he only is able to judge of the Painting, who is perfectly acquainted with the People it repreſents.

LET-

LETTER XX.

On ſuch of the

NOBILITY

As Cultivate the

BELLES LETTRES.

THERE once was a Time in *France* when the polite Arts were cultivated by Perſons of the higheſt Rank in the State. The Courtiers particularly, were converſant in them, although Indolence, a Taſte for Trifles, and a Paſſion for Intrigue, were the Divinities of the Country. The Court methinks at this Time ſeems to have given into a Taſte quite oppoſite to that of polite Literature, but perhaps the Mode of Thinking may be revived in a little Time. The *French* are of ſo flexible a Diſpoſition, may be moulded into ſuch a Variety of Shapes, that the Monarch needs but command and he

is immediately obeyed. The *Engliſh* generally think, and Learning is had in greater Honour among them than in our Country; an Advantage that reſults naturally from the Form of their Government. There are about eight hundred Perſons in *England* who have a Right to ſpeak in publick, and to ſupport the Intereſt of the Kingdom; and near five or ſix thouſand may in their Turns aſpire to the ſame Honour. The whole Nation ſet themſelves up as Judges over theſe, and every Man has the Liberty of publiſhing his Thoughts with regard to publick Affairs; which ſhews, that all the People in general are indiſpenſably obliged to cultivate their Underſtanding. In *England* the Government of *Greece* and *Rome* are the Subject of every Converſation, ſo that every Man is under a Neceſſity of peruſing ſuch Authors as treat of them, how diſagreeable ſoever it may be to him; and this Study leads naturally to that of polite Literature. Mankind in general ſpeak well in their reſpective Profeſſions. What is the Reaſon why our Magiſtrates, our Lawyers, our Phyſicians, and a great Number of the Clergy are abler Scholars, have a finer Taſte and more Wit than Perſons of all other Profeſſions? The Reaſon

Reaſon is, becauſe their Condition of Life requires a cultivated and enlightned Mind, in the ſame Manner as a Merchant is obliged to be acquainted with his Traffick. Not long ſince an *Engliſh* Nobleman, who was very young, came to *Paris* in his Return from *Italy*. He had writ a poetical Deſcription of that Country, which, for Delicacy and Politeneſs may vie with any Thing we meet with in the Earl of *Rocheſter*, or in our *Chaulieu*, our *Sarraſin*, or *Chapelle*. The Tranſlation I have given of it is ſo inexpreſſive of the Strength and delicate Humour of the Original, that I am obliged ſeriouſly to ask Pardon of the Author, and of all who underſtand *Engliſh*. However, as this is the only Method I have to make his Lordſhip's Verſes known, I ſhall here preſent you with them in our Tongue.

Qu'ay je donc vû dans l' Italie ?
Orgueil, Aſtuce, & Pauvreté,
Grands Complimens, peu de Bonté,
Et beaucoup de Ceremonie.

L' ex-

L' extravagante Comedie,
Que ſouvent l' Inquiſition *
Veut qu'on nomme Religion ;
Mais qu'ici nous nommons Folie.

La Nature en vain bienfaiſante
Veut enricher ſes Lieux charmans,
Des Prêtres la main deſolante
Etouffe ſes plus beaux préſens.

Les Monſignors, ſoy diſant Grands,
Seuls dans leurs Palais magnifiques
Y ſont d' illuſtres faineants,
Sans argent, & ſans domeſtiques.

Pour les Petits, ſans liberté,
Martyrs du joug qui les domine,
Ils ont fait vœu de pauvreté,
Priant Dieu par oiſiveté
Et toûjours jeunant par famine.

Ces beaux lieux du Pape benis
Semblent habitez par les Diables ;
Et les Habitans miſerables
Sont damnez dan le Paradis.

---

* His Lordſhip undoubtedly hints at the Farces which certain Preachers Act in the open Squares.

LET-

LETTER XXI.

ON THE

Earl of ROCHESTER

AND

Mr. *WALLER.*

THE Earl of *Rocheſter*'s Name is univerſally known. Mr. *de St. Evremont* hath made very frequent mention of him, but then he hath repreſented this famous Nobleman in no other Light than as the Man of Pleaſure, as one who was the Idol of the Fair; but with regard to my ſelf, I would willingly deſcribe in him the Man of Genius, the great Poet. Among other Pieces which diſplay the ſhining Imagination his Lordſhip only could boaſt, he wrote ſome Satyrs on the ſame Subjects as thoſe

thoſe our celebrated *Boileau* made choice of. I do not know any better Method of improving the Taſte, than to compare the Productions of ſuch great Genius's as have exerciſed their Talent on the ſame Subject. *Boileau* declaims as follows againſt human Reaſon in his Satyr on Man.

Cependant à le voir plein de vapeurs légeres,
Soi mème ſe berçer dè ſes propres chimeres,
Lui ſeus de la nature eſt la baze & l'appui,
Et le dixieme ciel ne tourne que pour lui.
De tous les Animaux il eſt ici le Maitre ;
Qui pourroit le nier, pourſuis tu ? Moi-peut être.
Ce mâitre prêtendu qui leur donne des loix,
Ce Roi des Animaux, combien a-t' il de Rois ?

Yet pleas'd with idle Whimſies of his Brain,
And puff'd with Pride, this haughty Thing wou'd fain
Be thought himſelf the only Stay and Prop
That holds the mighty Frame of Nature up.

The

The Skies and Stars his Properties muſt ſeem,

— — — —

Of all the Creatures he's the Lord, he cries.

— — —

And who is there, *ſay you*, that dares deny
So own'd a Truth? That may be, Sir, do I.

— — — —

This boaſted Monarch of the World who awes
The Creatures here, and with his Nod gives Laws;
This ſelf-nam'd King, who thus pretends to be
The Lord of all, how many Lords has he?
Oldham a little alter'd.

The Lord *Rocheſter* expreſſeth himſelf, in his Satyr againſt Man, in pretty near the following Manner: But I muſt firſt deſire you always to remember, that the Verſions I give you from the *Engliſh* Poets are written with Freedom and Latitude; and that the Reſtraint of our Verſification, and the Delicacies of the *French*

French Tongue, will not allow a Tranſlator to convey into it the licentious Impetuoſity and Fire of the *Engliſh* Numbers.

Cet Eſprit que je haïs, cet Eſprit plein d'erreur,
Ce n'eſt pas ma raiſon, c'eſt la tienne Docteur.
C'eſt la raiſon frivôle, iniquiete, orgeuilleuſe
Des ſages Animaux, rivale dédaigneuſe,
Qui croit entr'eux & l' Ange, occuper le milieu,
Et penſe être ici bas l' image, de ſon Dieu.
Vil atome imparfait, qui croit, doute, diſpute
Rampe, s'eleve, tombe, & nie encore ſa chûte.
Qui nous dit je ſuis libre, en nous montrant ſes fers,
Et dont l'œil trouble & faux, croit percer l' univers.
Allez, revsrends Fous, bienheureux Fanatiques,
Compilez bien l' Amas de vos Riens ſcholaſtiques,
Peres de Viſions, & d' Enigmes ſacrez,
Auteurs du Labirinthe, ou vous vous égarez.

Allez

Allez obſcurement éclaircir vos miſteres,
Et courez dans l'école adorer vos chimeres.
Il eſt d' autres erreurs, il eſt de ces dévots
Condamné par eux mêmes, à l'ennui du repos.
Ce myſtique encloîtré fier de ſon Indolence
Tranquille, au ſein de Dieu. Que peut il faire? Il penſe.
Non, tu ne penſes point, miſérable, tu dors:
Inutile à la terre, & mis au rang des Morts.
Ton eſprit énervé croupit dans la Moleſſe.
Reveille toi, ſoes homme, & ſors de ton Yvreſſe.
L'homme eſt né pour agir, & tu pretens penſer? &c.

The Original runs thus:

Hold, mighty Man, I cry all this we know,
And 'tis this very Reaſon I deſpiſe,
This ſupernatural Gift, that makes a Mite
Think he's the Image of the Infinite;
Comparing his ſhort Life, void of all reſt,
To the eternal and the ever bleſt.

This

This busy, puzzling Stirrer up of Doubt,
That frames deep Mysteries, then finds 'em out,
Filling, with frantic Crowds of thinking Fools,
Those reverend Bedlams, Colleges and Schools;
Borne on whose Wings, each heavy Sot can pierce
The Limits of the boundless Universe.
So charming Ointments make an old Witch fly,
And bear a crippled Carcass through the Sky.
'Tis this exalted Power, whose Business lies
In Nonsense and impossibilities.
This made a whimsical Philosopher,
Before the spacious World his Tub prefer;
And we have modern cloyster'd Coxcombs, who
Retire to think, 'cause they have naught to do:
But Thoughts are giv'n for Action's Government,
Where Action ceases, Thought's impertinent.

Whe-

Whether theſe Ideas are true or falſe, it is certain they are expreſſed with an Energy and Fire which form the Poet. I ſhall be very far from attempting to examine philoſophically into theſe Verſes; to lay down the Pencil and take up the Rule and Compaſs on this Occaſion; my only Deſign in this Letter, being to diſplay the Genius of the *Engliſh* Poets, and therefore I ſhall continue in the ſame View.

The celebrated Mr. *Waller* hath been very much talked of in *France*, and Mr. *de la Fontaine*, St. *Evremont* and *Bayle* have written his Elogium, but ſtill his Name only is known. He had much the ſame Reputation in *London* as *Voiture* had in *Paris*, and in my Opinion deſerved it better. *Voiture* was born in an Age that was juſt emerging from Barbarity; an Age that was ſtill rude and ignorant, the People of which aimed at Wit, though they had not the leaſt Pretenſions to it, and ſought for Points and Conceits inſtead of Sentiments. *Briſtol* Stones are more eaſily found than Diamonds. *Voiture*, born with an eaſy and frivolous Genius, was the firſt who ſhone in this Aurora of *French* Literature. Had he come into the World after thoſe

great

great Genius's who ſpread ſuch a Glory over the Age of *Lewis* the Fourteenth, he would either have been unknown, would have been deſpiſed, or would have corrected his Style. *Boileau* applauded him, but it was in his firſt Satyrs, at a Time when the Taſte of that great Poet was not yet formed. He was young, and in an Age when Perſons form a Judgment of Men from the Reputation, and not from their Writings. Beſides, *Boileau* was very partial both in his Encomiums and his Cenſures. He applauded *Segrais*, whoſe Works no Body reads; he abuſed *Quinault*, whoſe poetical Pieces every one hath got by Heart, and is wholly ſilent upon *La Fontaine*. *Waller*, though a better Poet than *Voiture*, was not yet a finiſhed Poet. The Graces breathe in ſuch of *Waller*'s Works as are writ in a tender Strain, but then they are languid through Negligence, and often disfigured with falſe Thoughts. The *Engliſh* had not, in his Time attained the Art of correct Writing. But his ſerious Compoſitions exhibit a Strength and Vigour which could not have been expected from the Softneſs and Effeminacy of his other Pieces. He wrote an Elegy on *Oliver Cromwell*, which with all

all its Faults is nevertheleſs looked upon as a Maſter-Piece. To underſtand this Copy of Verſes, you are to know that the Day *Oliver* died was remarkable for a great Storm. His Poem begins in this Manner.

Il n'eſt plus, s'en eſt fait, ſoumettons nous au ſort,
Le ciel a ſignalé ce jour par des tempêtes,
Et la voix dos tonnerres éclatant ſur nos têtes
Vient d'annoncer ſa mort.

Par ſes derniers ſoupirs il ébranle cet île;
Cet île que ſon bras fit trembler tant de fois,
Quand dans le cours de ſes Exploits,
Il briſoit la tête des Rois,
Et ſoumettoit un peuple à ſon joug ſeul docile.

Mer tu t'en és troublé; O Mer tes flots? émus
Semblent dire en grondant aux plus lointains rivages
Que l'effroi de la terre & ton Maître n'eſt plus.

Tel

Tel au ciel autrefois s'envola Romulus,
Tel il qu ta la Terre, au milieu des orages,
Tel d'un peuple guerrier il recut les hommages;
Oüi dans ſa vie, à ſa mort adoré,
Son palais fut un Temple, &c.

We muſt reſign! Heav'n his great Soul does claim
In Storms as loud as his immortal Fame:
His dying Groans, his laſt Breath ſhakes our Iſle,
And trees uncut fall for his funeral Pile:
About his Palace their broad Roots are toſt
Into the Air; ſo Romulus *was loſt!*
New Rome *in ſuch a Tempeſt miſs'd her King,*
And from obeying fell to worſhipping:
On Oeta's *Top thus* Hercules *lay dead,*
With ruin'd Oaks and Pines about him ſpread.
Nature herſelf took Notice of his Death,
And, ſighing, ſwell'd the Sea with ſuch a Breath,

That

That to the remoteſt Shores the Billows roul'd
Th' approaching Fate of his great Ruler told. Waller.

'Twas this Elogium that gave Occaſion to the Reply (taken Notice of in *Bayle*'s Dictionary,) which *Waller* made to King *Charles* the Second. This King, to whom *Waller* had a little before, (as is uſual with Bards and Monarchs) preſented a Copy of Verſes embroidered with Praiſes; reproached the Poet for not writing with ſo much Energy and Fire as when he had applauded the Uſurper (meaning *Oliver*;) *Sir*, replied *Waller* to the King, *we Poets ſucceed better in Fiction than in Truth.* This Anſwer was not ſo ſincere as that which a *Dutch* Ambaſſador made, who, when the ſame Monarch complained that his Maſters paid leſs Regard to him than they had done to *Cromwell*; *Ah Sir!* ſays the Ambaſſador, Oliver *was quite another Man* ——— It is not my Intent to give a Commentary on *Waller*'s Character, nor on that of any other Perſon; for I conſider Men after their Death in no other Light than as they were Writers, and wholly diſregard every Thing elſe. I ſhall only obſerve, that *Waller*, though born in a Court, and to an

Eſtate of five or ſix thouſand Pounds *Sterling* a Year, was never ſo proud or ſo indolent as to lay aſide the happy Talent which Nature had indulged him. The Earls of *Dorſet* and *Roſcommon*, the two Dukes of *Buckingham*, the Lord *Halifax* and ſo many other Noblemen, did not think the Reputation they obtained of very great Poets and illuſtrious Writers, any way derogatory to their Quality. They are more glorious for their Works than for their Titles. Theſe cultivated the polite Arts with as much Aſſiduity, as though they had been their whole Dependance. They alſo have made Learning appear venerable in the Eyes of the Vulgar, who have need to be led in all Things by the Great; and who nevertheleſs faſhion their Manners leſs after thoſe of the Nobility (in *England* I mean) than in any other Country in the World.

LET-

LETTER XXII.

ON

Mr. *POPE*,

And ſome other FAMOUS

POETS.

I Intended to treat of Mr. *Prior*, one of the moſt amiable *Engliſh* Poets, whom you ſaw Plenipotentiary and Envoy Extraordinary at *Paris* in 1712. I alſo deſigned to have given you ſome Idea of the Lord *Roſcommon*'s and the Lord *Dorſet*'s Muſe; but I find that to do this I ſhould be obliged to write a large Volume, and that after much Pains and Trouble you would have but an imperfect Idea of all thoſe Works. Poetry is a kind of Muſic, in which a Man ſhould have ſome Knowledge before he pretends to judge of it.

When I give you a Tranſlation of ſome Paſſages from thoſe foreign Poets, I only prick down, and that imperfectly, their Muſic; but then I cannot expreſs the Taſte of their Harmony.

There is one *Engliſh* Poem eſpecially, which I ſhould deſpair of ever making you underſtand, the Title whereof is *Hudibras*. The Subject of it is the Civil War in the Time of the Grand Rebellion; and the Principles and Practice of the Puritans are therein ridiculed. It is *Don Quixot*, it is our * *Satyre Menippée* blended together. I never found ſo much Wit in one ſingle Book as in that, which at the ſame Time is the moſt difficult to be tranſlated. Who would believe that a Work which paints in ſuch lively and natural Colours the

* A Species of Satyr in Proſe and Verſe written in *France* in 1594, againſt the Chiefs of the League at that Time. This Satyr which is alſo called *Catholicon d' Eſpagne*, was looked upon as a Maſter-piece. *Rapin*, *Le Roi*, *Pithou*, *Paſſerat* and *Chretien*, the greateſt Wits of that Age, are the Authors of it; and it was entituled *Menippe*, from *Menippus*, a cynical Philoſopher, who had written Letters filled with ſharp, ſatyrical Expreſſions, in Imitation of *Varro*, who compoſed Satyrs which he entituled *Satyre Menippea*.

ſeveral

ſeveral Foibles and Follies of Mankind, and where we meet with more Sentiments than Words, ſhould baffle the Endeavours of the ableſt Tranſlator? But the Reaſon of this is; almoſt every Part of it alludes to particular Incidents. The Clergy are there made the principal Object of Ridicule, which is underſtood but by few among the Laity. To explain this a Commentary would be requiſite, and *Humour* when explained is no longer Humour. Whoever ſets up for a Commentator of ſmart Sayings and Repartees, is himſelf a Blockhead. This is the Reaſon why the Works of the ingenious Dean *Swift*, who hath been called the *Engliſh Rabelais*, will never be well underſtood in *France*. This Gentleman has the Honour (in common with *Rabelais*) of being a Prieſt, and like him laughs at every Thing. But in my humble Opinion, the Title of the *Engliſh Rabelais* which is given the Dean is highly derogatory to his Genius. The former hath interſperſed his unaccountably-fantaſtic and unintelligible Book, with the moſt gay Strokes of Humour, but which at the ſame Time hath a greater Proportion of Impertinence. He hath been vaſtly laviſh of Erudition, of Smut,

and

and inſipid Raillery. An agreeable Tale of two Pages is purchaſed at the Expence of whole Volumes of Nonſenſe. There are but few Perſons, and thoſe of a groteſque Taſte, who pretend to underſtand, and to eſteem this Work; for as to the reſt of the Nation, they laugh at the pleaſant and diverting Touches which are found in *Rabelais*, and deſpiſe his Book. He is looked upon as the Prince of Buffoons. The Readers are vexed to think that a Man who was Maſter of ſo much Wit ſhould have made ſo wretched a Uſe of it. He is an intoxicated Philoſopher, who never writ but when he was in Liquor.

Dean *Swift* is *Rabelais* in his Senſes, and frequenting the politeſt Company. The former indeed is not ſo gay as the latter, but then he poſſeſſeth all the Delicacy, the Juſtneſs, the Choice, the good Taſte, in all which Particulars our giggling rural Vicar *Rabelais* is wanting. The poetical Numbers of Dean *Swift* are of a ſingular and almoſt inimitable Taſte; true Humour whether in Proſe or Verſe, ſeems to be his peculiar Talent, but whoever is deſirous of underſtanding him perfectly, muſt viſit the * Iſland in which he was born.

It will

* Ireland.

It will be much eaſier for you to form an Idea of Mr. *Pope*'s Works. He is in my Opinion the moſt elegant, the moſt correct Poet; and at the ſame Time the moſt harmonious (a Circumſtance which redounds very much to the Honour of this Muſe) that *England* ever gave Birth to. He hath mellowed the harſh Sounds of the *Engliſh* Trumpet, to the ſoft Accents of the Flute. His Compoſitions may be eaſily tranſlated, becauſe they are vaſtly clear and perſpicuous; beſides, moſt of his Subjects are general, and relative to all Nations.

His *Eſſay on Criticiſm* will ſoon be known in *France*, by the Tranſlation which *l'Abbé de Renel* hath made of it.

Here is an Extract from his Poem entituled the *Rape of the Lock*, which I juſt now tranſlated with the Latitude I uſually take on theſe Occaſions; for once again, nothing can be more ridiculous than to tranſlate a Poet literally.

Umbriel, *a l'inſtant, vieil Gnome rechigné,*
Va d'une aîle peſante & d'un air renfrogné
Chercher en murmurant la Caverne profonde,

Ou

Où loin des doux raïons que répand l'œil du monde
La Déesse aux vapeurs a choisi son séjour,
Les tristes Aquilons y sifflent à l'entour.
Et le souffle mal sain de leur aride haleine.
Y porte aux environs la fievre & la migraine.
Sur un riche Sofa derriere un Paravent
Loin des flambeaux, du bruit, des parleurs & du vent,
La quinteuse Déesse incessamment repose,
Le cœur gros de chagrin, sans en savoir la cause.
N'aiant pensé jamais, l'esprit toûjours troublé
L'œil chargé, le teint pâle, & l'hypocondre enflé.
La medisante Envie, est assise auprès d'elle
Vieil spectre féminin, décrépite pucelle,
Avec un air devot déchirant son prochain,
Et chansonnant les Gens l'Evangile à la main.
Sur un lit plein de fleurs negligemment panchée,
Une jeune Beauté non loin d'elle est couchée,

C'eſt l'Affectation qui graſſaï en parlant,
Ecoute ſans entendre, & lorgne en regardant.
Qui rougit ſans pudeur, & rit de tout ſans joïe;
De cent maux différens prétend qu'elle eſt la proïe;
Et pleine de ſanté ſous le rouge & le fard,
Se plaint avec moleſſe, & ſe pame avec Art.

Umbriel, *a dusky, melancholy Sprite*
As ever ſullied the fair Face of Light,
Down to the central Earth, his proper Scene,
Repairs to ſearch the gloomy Cave of Spleen.
Swift on his ſooty Pinions flits the Gnome,
And in a Vapour reach'd the diſmal Dome.
No chearful Breeze this ſullen Region knows,
The dreaded Eaſt is all the Wind that blows.
Here, in a Grotto, ſhelter'd cloſe from Air,
And ſcreen'd in Shades from Day's deteſted Glare,
She ſighs for ever on her penſive Bed,
Pain *at her Side, and* Megrim *at her Head,*
Two Handmaids wait the Throne: alike in Place,
But differing far in Figure and in Face,

Here

Here ſtood Ill-nature *like an ancient Maid,*
Her wrinkled Form in black and white array'd;
With Store of Prayers for Mornings, Nights, and Noons,
Her Hand is fill'd; her Boſom with Lampoons.
There Affectation, *with a ſickly Mein,*
Shows in her Cheek the Roſes of eighteen,
Practis'd to liſp, and hang the Head aſide,
Faints into Airs, and languiſhes with Pride;
On the Rich Quilt ſinks with becoming Woe,
Wrapt in a Gown, for Sickneſs and for Show.

This Extract in the Original, (not in the faint Tranſlation) I have given you of it, may be compared to the Deſcription of *La Moleſſe* (Softneſs or Effeminacy) in *Boileau's Lutrin.*

Methinks I now have given you Specimens enough from the *Engliſh* Poets. I have made ſome tranſient mention of their Philoſophers, but as for good Hiſtorians among them, I do not know of any; and indeed a *French* Man was forced to write their Hiſtory. Poſſibly the *Engliſh* Genius,

us, which is either languid or impetuous, hath not yet required that unaffected Eloquence, that plain but majeſtic Air which Hiſtory requires. Poſſibly too, the Spirit of Party which exhibits Objects in a dim and confuſed Light, may have ſunk the Credit of their Hiſtorians. One half of the Nation is always at Variance with the other half. I have met with People who aſſured me that the Duke of *Marlborough* was a Coward, and that Mr. *Pope* was a Fool; juſt as ſome Jeſuits in *France* declare *Paſcal* to have been a Man of little or no Genius; and ſome Janſeniſts affirm Father *Bourdalcüe* to have been a mere Babbler. The Jacobites conſider *Mary* Queen of *Scots* as a pious Heroine, but thoſe of an oppoſite Party look upon her as a Proſtitute, an Adultereſs, a Murtherer. Thus the *Engliſh* have Memorials of the ſeveral Reigns, but no ſuch Thing as a Hiſtory. There is indeed now living, one Mr. *Gordon*, (the Publick are obliged to him for a Tranſlation of *Tacitus*) who is very capable of writing the Hiſtory of his own Country, but *Rapin de Thoyras* got the Start of him. To conclude, in my Opinion, the *Engliſh* have not ſuch good Hiſtorians as the *French*, have no ſuch Thing as a real Tragedy, have ſeveral de-

lightful

lightful Comedies, ſome wonderful Paſſages in certain of their Poems, and boaſt of Philoſophers that are worthy of inſtructing Mankind. The *Engliſh* have reaped very great Benefit from the Writers of our Nation, and therefore we ought, (ſince they have not ſcrupled to be in our Debt,) to borrow from them. Both the *Engliſh* and we came after the *Italians*, who have been our Inſtructors in all the Arts, and whom we have ſurpaſſed in ſome. I cannot determine which of the three Nations ought to be honoured with the Palm; but happy the Writer who could diſplay their various Merits.

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LETTER XXIII.

ON THE

REGARD

That ought to be ſhewn to

MEN of LETTERS.

NEITHER the *Engliſh*, nor any other People have Foundations eſtabliſhed in favour of the polite Arts like thoſe in *France*. There are Univerſities in moſt Countries, but it is in *France* only that we meet with ſo beneficial an Encouragement for Aſtronomy, and all Parts of the Mathematicks, for Phyſick, for Reſearches into Antiquity, for Painting, Sculpture and Architecture. *Lewis* the Fourteenth has immortalized his Name by theſe ſeveral Foundations, and this Immortality did not coſt him two hundred thouſand Livres a Year.

I muſt confeſs that one of the Things I very much wonder at is, that as the Parliament of *Great-Britain* have promiſed a Reward of twenty thouſand Pounds Sterling to any Perſon who may diſcover the Longitude, they ſhould never have once thought to imitate *Lewis* the fourteenth in his Munificence with regard to the Arts and Sciences.

Merit indeed meets in *England* with Rewards of another kind, which redound more to the Honour of the Nation. The *Engliſh* have ſo great a Veneration for exalted Talents, that a Man of Merit in their Country is always ſure of making his Fortune. Mr. *Addiſon* in *France* would have been elected a Member of one of the Academies, and, by the Credit of ſome Women, might have obtained a Yearly Penſion of twelve hundred Livres; or elſe might have been impriſoned in the *Baſtile*, upon Pretence that certain Strokes in his Tragedy of *Cato* had been diſcovered, which glanced at the Porter of ſome Men in Power. Mr. *Addiſon* was raiſed to the Poſt of Secretary of State in *England*. Sir *Iſaac Newton* was made Warden of the Royal Mint. Mr. *Congreve* had a conſiderable * Employment. Mr. *Prior* was Ple-

* Secretary for *Jamaica*.

Plenipotentiary. Dr. *Swift* is Dean of St. *Patrick*'s in *Dublin*, and is more rever'd in *Ireland* than the Primate himself. The Religion which Mr. *Pope* professeth excludes him indeed from Preferments of every kind, but then it did not prevent his gaining two hundred Thousand Livres by his excellent Translation of *Homer*. I my self saw a long Time in *France* the Author of † *Rhadamistus* ready to perish for Hunger: And the Son of one of the greatest Men * our Country ever gave Birth to, and who was beginning to run the noble Career which his Father had set him, would have been reduced to the Extreams of Misery, had he not been patronized by Monsieur *Fagon*.

But the Circumstance which mostly encourages the Arts in *England*, is the great veneration which is paid them. The Picture of the prime Minister hangs over the Chimney of his own Closet, but I have seen that of Mr. *Pope* in twenty Noblemens Houses. Sir *Isaac Newton* was revered in his Life-time, and had a due Respect paid to him after his Death; the greatest Men in the Nation disputing who

† Mr. *de Crebillon*. * *Racine*.

who ſhould have the Honour of holding up his Pall. Go into *Weſtminſter-Abby*, and you will find that what raiſes the Admiration of the Spectators is not the Mauſoleums of the *Engliſh* Kings, but the Monuments which the Gratitude of the Nation hath erected, to perpetuate the Memory of thoſe illuſtrious Men who contributed to its Glory. We view their Statutes in that Abby in the ſame Manner, as thoſe of *Sophocles*, *Plato* and other immortal Perſonages were viewed in *Athens*; and I am perſwaded, that the bare Sight of thoſe glorious Monuments hath fired more than one Breaſt, and been the Occaſion of their becoming great Men.

The *Engliſh* have even been reproached with paying too extravagant Honours to mere Merit, and cenſured for interring the celebrated Actreſs Mrs. *Oldfield* in *Weſtminſter-Abby*, with almoſt the ſame Pomp as Sir *Iſaac Newton*. Some pretend that the *Engliſh* had paid her theſe great Funeral Honours, purpoſely to make us more ſtrongly ſenſible of the Barbarity and Injuſtice which they object to us, for having buried *Mademoiſelle la Couvreur* ignominiouſly in the Fields.

But be aſſured from me, that the *Engliſh* were prompted by no other Principle, in burying

burying Mrs. *Oldfield* in *Weſtminſter Abbey*, than their good Senſe. They are far from being ſo ridiculous as to brand with Infamy an Art which hath immortalized an *Euripides* and *a Sophocles*; or to exclude from the Body of their Citizens a Set of People whoſe Buſineſs is to ſet off with the utmoſt Grace of Speech and Action, thoſe Pieces which the Nation is proud of.

Under the Reign of *Charles* the Firſt, and in the Beginning of the Civil Wars raiſed by a Number of rigid Fanaticks, who at laſt were the Victims to it; a great many pieces were publiſhed againſt Theatrical and other Shews, which were attacked with the greater Virulence, becauſe that Monarch and his Queen, Daughter to *Henry* the Fourth of *France*, were paſſionately fond of them.

One Mr. *Prynne*, a Man of moſt furiouſly ſcrupulous Principles, who would have thought himſelf damned had he wore a Caſſock inſtead of a ſhort Clock, and have been glad to ſee one half of Mankind cut the other to Pieces for the Glory of God, and the *Propaganda Fide*; took it into his Head to write a moſt wretched Satyr againſt ſome pretty good Comedies, which were exhibited very innocently every Night before their Majeſties. He quo-

ted the Authority of the Rabbies, and ſome Paſſages from St. *Bonaventure*, to prove that the *Oedipus* of *Sophocles* was the Work of the evil Spirit; that *Terence* was excommunicated *ipſo facto*; and added, that doubtleſs *Brutus*, who was a very ſevere Janſeniſt, aſſaſſinated *Julius Cæſar*, for no other Reaſon, but becauſe he who was *Pontifex Maximus*, preſumed to write a Tragedy, the Subject of which was *Oedipus*. Laſtly, he declared that all who frequented the Theatre were excommunicated, as they thereby renounced their Baptiſm. This was caſting the higheſt Inſult on the King and the Royal Family; and as the *Engliſh* loved their Prince at that Time, they could not bear to hear a Writer talk of excommunicating him, although they themſelves afterwards cut his Head off. *Prynne* was ſummon'd to appear before the Star Chamber; this wonderful Book, from which Father *Le Brun* ſtole his, was ſentenced to be burnt by the common Hangman, and himſelf to loſe his Ears. His Tryal is now extant.

The *Italians* are far from attempting to caſt a Blemiſh on the Opera, or to excommunicate Signior *Seneſino* or Signiora *Cuzzoni*. With regard to my ſelf, I could preſume to wiſh that the Magiſtrates would

would ſuppreſs I know not what contemptible Pieces, written againſt the Stage. For when the *Engliſh* and *Italians* hear that we brand with the greateſt Mark of Infamy an Art in which we excel; that we excommunicate Perſons who receive Salaries from the King; that we condemn as impious a Spectacle exhibited in Convents and Monaſteries; that we diſhonour Sports in which *Lewis* the Fourteenth, and *Lewis* the Fifteenth performed as Actors; that we give the Title of the Devil's Works to the Pieces which are received by Magiſtrates of the moſt ſevere Character, and repreſented before a virtuous Queen; when, I ſay Foreigners are told of this inſolent Conduct, this Contempt for the Royal Authority, and this Gothic Ruſticity which ſome preſume to call Chriſtian Severity; what an Idea muſt they entertain of our Nation? And how will it be poſſible for them to conceive, either that our Laws give a Sanction to an Art which is declared infamous, or that ſome Perſons dare to ſtamp with Infamy an Art which receives a Sanction from the Laws, is rewarded by Kings, cultivated and encouraged by the greateſt Men, and admired by whole Nations? And that Father *Le Brun*'s impertinent

Libel againſt the Stage, is ſeen in a Book-ſeller's Shop, ſtanding very next to the immortal Labours of *Racine*, of *Corneille*, of *Moliere*, &c.

LETTER XXIV.

ON THE

ROYAL SOCIETY

AND OTHER

ACADEMIES.

THE *Engliſh* had an Academy of Sciences many Years before us, but then it is not under ſuch prudent Regulations as ours, the only Reaſon of which very poſſibly is, becauſe it was founded before the Academy of *Paris*; for had it been founded after, it would very probably have adopted ſome of the ſage

ſage Laws of the former, and improved upon others.

Two things, and thoſe the moſt eſſential to Man, are wanting in the Royal Society of *London*, I mean Rewards and Laws. A Seat in the Academy at *Paris* is a ſmall, but ſecure Fortune to a Geometrician or a Chymiſt; but this is ſo far from being the Caſe at *London*, that the ſeveral Members of the Royal Society are at a continual, though indeed ſmall Expence. Any Man in *England* who declares himſelf a Lover of the Mathematicks and natural Philoſophy, and expreſſeth an Inclination to be a Member of the Royal Society, is immediately elected into it * But in *France* it is not enough that a Man who aſpires to the Honour of being a Member of the Academy, and of receiving the Royal Stipend, hath a Love for the Sciences; he muſt at the ſame Time be deeply skilled in them; and is obliged

* The Reader will call to Mind that theſe Letters were written about 1728 or 30, ſince which Time the Names of the ſeveral Candidates are, by a Law of the Royal Society, poſted up in it, in order that a Choice may be made of ſuch Perſons only as are qualified to be Members. The celebrated Mr. *de Fontenelle* had the Honour to paſs thro' this *Ordeal*.

obliged to diſpute the Seat with Competitors who are ſo much the more formidable as they are fired by a Principle of Glory, by Intereſt, by the Difficulty it ſelf, and by that Inflexibility of Mind, which is generally found in thoſe who devote themſelves to that pertinacious Study, the Mathematicks.

The Academy of Sciences is prudently confined to the Study of Nature; and, indeed, this is a Field ſpacious enough for fifty or threeſcore Perſons to range in. That of *London* mixes indiſcriminately Literature with Phyſicks: But methinks the founding an Academy merely for the polite Arts is more judicious, as it prevents Confuſion, and the joining, in ſome Meaſure, of Heterogeneal, ſuch as a Diſſertation on the Head-dreſſes of the *Roman* Ladies with an hundred or more new Curves.

As there is very little Order and Regularity in the Royal Society, and not the leaſt Encouragement; and that the Academy of *Paris* is on a quite different Foot, it is no wonder that our Tranſactions are drawn up in a more juſt and beautiful Manner than thoſe of the *Engliſh*. Soldiers who are under a regular Diſcipline, and beſides well paid, muſt neceſſarily,

farily, at laſt, perform more glorious Atchievements than others who are mere Voluntiers. It muſt indeed be confeſſed, that the Royal Society boaſt their *Newton*, but then he did not owe his Knowledge and Diſcoveries to that Body; ſo far from it, that the latter were intelligible to very few of his Fellow-Members. A Genius like that of Sir *Iſaac* belonged to all the Academies in the World, becauſe all had a thouſand Things to learn of him.

The celebrated Dean *Swift* formed a Deſign, in the latter End of the late Queen's Reign, to found an Academy for the *Engliſh* Tongue upon the Model of that of the *French*. This Project was promoted by the late Earl of *Oxford*, Lord High Treaſurer, and much more by the Lord *Bolingbroke*, Secretary of State, who had the happy Talent of ſpeaking without Premeditation in the Parliament, with almoſt as much Purity as Dean *Swift* writ in his Cloſet, and who would have been the Ornament and Protector of that Academy. Thoſe only would have been choſen Members of it, whoſe Works will laſt as long as the *Engliſh* Tongue, ſuch as Dean *Swift*, Mr. *Prior*, whom we ſaw here inveſted with a publick Character,

racter, and whoſe Fame in *England* is equal to that of *Fontaine* in *France*; Mr. *Pope* the Engliſh *Boileau*, Mr. *Congreve* who may be called their *Moliere*, and ſeveral other eminent Perſons whoſe Names I have forgot; all theſe would have raiſed the Glory of that Body to a great Height even in it's Infancy. But Queen *Anne* being ſnatched ſuddenly from the World, the Whigs were reſolved to ruin the Protectors of the intended Academy, a Circumſtance that was of the moſt fatal Conſequence to polite Literature. The Members of this Academy would have had a very great Advantage over thoſe who firſt formed that of the *French*, for *Swift*, *Prior*, *Congreve*, *Dryden*, *Pope*, *Addiſon*, &c. had fixed the *Engliſh* Tongue by their Writings; whereas *Chapelain*, *Colletet*, *Caſſaigne*, *Faret*, *Perrin*, *Cotin*, our firſt Academicians, were a Diſgrace to their Country; and ſo much Ridicule is now attached to their very Names, that if an Author of ſome Genius in this Age had the Misfortune to be called *Chapelain* or *Cotin*, he would be under a Neceſſity of changing it.

One Circumſtance, to which the *Engliſh* Academy ſhould eſpecially have attended,

tended, is, to have preſcribed to themſelves Occupations of a quite different kind from thoſe with which our Academicians amuſe themſelves. A Wit of this Country asked me for the Memoirs of the *French* Academy. I anſwered, they have no Memoirs, but have printed threeſcore or fourſcore Volumes in Quarto of Compliments. The Gentleman peruſed one or two of them, but without being able to underſtand the Style in which they were written, though he underſtood all our good Authors perfectly. All, ſays he, I ſee in theſe elegant Diſcourſes is, that the Member elect having aſſured the Audience that his Predeceſſor was a great Man, that Cardinal *Richelieu* was a very great Man, that the Chancellor *Seguier* was a pretty great Man, that *Lewis* the Fourteenth was a more than great Man; the Director anſwers in the very ſame Strain, and adds, that the Member elect may alſo be a ſort of great Man, and that himſelf, in Quality of Director, muſt alſo have ſome Share in this Greatneſs.

The Cauſe why all theſe academical Diſcourſes have unhappily done ſo little Honour to this Body is evident enough. *Vitium eſt temporis potiùs quam hominis.* (The Fault is owing to the Age rather than

than to particular Perſons.) It grew up inſenſibly into a Cuſtom for every Academician to repeat theſe Elogiums at his Reception; it was laid down as a kind of Law, that the Publick ſhould be indulged from Time to Time the ſullen Satisfaction of yawning over theſe Productions. If the Reaſon ſhould afterwards be ſought, why the greateſt Genius's who have been incorporated into that Body have ſometimes made the worſt Speeches; I anſwer, that it is wholly owing to a ſtrong Propenſion, the Gentlemen in Queſtion had to ſhine, and to diſplay a thread-bare, worn-out Subject in a new and uncommon Light. The Neceſſity of ſaying ſomething, the perplexity of having nothing to ſay, and a Deſire of being witty, are three Circumſtances which alone are capable of making even the greateſt Writer ridiculous. Theſe Gentlemen, not being able to ſtrike out any new Thoughts, hunted after a new Play of Words, and delivered themſelves without thinking at all, in like Manner as People who ſhould ſeem to chew with great Eagerneſs, and make as though they were eating, at the ſame Time that they were juſt ſtarved.

It is a Law in the *French* Academy, to publiſh all thoſe Diſcourſes by which only

only they are known, but they ſhould rather make a Law never to print any of them.

But the Academy of the *Belles Lettres* have a more prudent and more uſeful Object which is, to preſent the Publick with a Collection of Tranſactions that abound with curious Reſearches and Criticiſms. Theſe Tranſactions are already eſteemed by Foreigners; and it were only to be wiſhed, that ſome Subjects in them had been more thoroughly examined, and that others had not been treated at all. As for Inſtance, we ſhould have been very well ſatisfied, had they omitted I know not what Diſſertation on the Prerogative of the Right Hand over the Left; and ſome others, which though not publiſhed under ſo ridiculous a Title, are yet written on Subjects that are almoſt as frivolous and ſilly.

The Academy of Sciences, in ſuch of their Reſearches as are of a more difficult kind and a more ſenſible Uſe, embrace the Knowledge of Nature and the Improvements of the Arts. We may preſume that ſuch profound, ſuch uninterrupted Purſuits as theſe, ſuch exact Calculations, ſuch refined Diſcoveries, ſuch extenſive and exalted Views, will, at laſt,

laſt, produce ſomething that may prove of Advantage to the Univerſe. Hitherto, as we have obſerved together, the moſt uſeful Diſcoveries have been made in the moſt barbarous Times. One would conclude, that the Buſineſs of the moſt enlightned Ages and the moſt learned Bodies, is, to argue and debate on Things which were invented by ignorant People. We know exactly the Angle which the Sail of a Ship is to make with the Keel, in order to its ſailing better; and yet *Columbus* diſcovered *America*, without having the leaſt Idea of the Property of this Angle: However I am far from inferring from hence, that we are to confine our ſelves merely to a blind Practice, but happy it were, would Naturaliſts and Geometricians unite, as much as poſſible, the Practice with the Theory.

Strange, but ſo it is, that thoſe Things which reflect the greateſt Honour on the human Mind, are frequently of the leaſt Benefit to it! A Man who underſtands the four Fundamental Rules of Arithmetick, aided by a little good Senſe, ſhall amaſs prodigious Wealth in Trade, ſhall become a Sir *Peter Delmé*, a Sir *Richard Hopkins*, a Sir *Gilbert Heathcot*, whilſt a poor Algebraiſt ſpends his whole Life in

ſearching

ſearching for aſtoniſhing Properties and Relations in Numbers, which at the ſame time are of no manner of Uſe, and will not acquaint him with the Nature of Exchanges. This is very nearly the Caſe with moſt of the Arts; there is a certain Point, beyond which, all Reſearches ſerve to no other Purpoſe, than merely to delight an inquiſitive Mind. Thoſe ingenious and uſeleſs Truths may be compared to Stars, which, by being placed at too great a Diſtance, cannot afford us the leaſt Light.

With regard to the *French* Academy, how great a Service would they do to Literature, to the Language, and the Nation, if, inſtead of publiſhing a ſet of Compliments annually, they would give us new Editions of the valuable Works written in the Age of *Lewis* the Fourteenth, purged from the ſeveral Errors of Diction which are crept into them. There are many of theſe Errors in *Corneille* and *Moliere*, but thoſe in *La Fontaine* are very numerous. Such as could not be corrected, might at leaſt be pointed out. By this Means, as all the *Europeans* read thoſe Works, they would teach them our Language in its utmoſt Purity, which, by that Means, would be fixed to

a laſting Standard; and valuable *French* Books being then printed at the King's Expence, would prove one of the moſt glorious Monuments the Nation could boaſt. I have been told that *Boileau* formerly made this Propoſal, and that it hath ſince been revived by a * Gentleman eminent for his Genius, his fine Senſe, and juſt Taſte for Criticiſm; but this Thought has met with the Fate of many other uſeful Projects, of being applauded and neglected.

---

* *Abbè de Rothelin* of the *French* Academy.

FINIS.

A

LETTER

Concerning the

Burning of *ALTENA*,

As related in the

Hiſtory of *Charles* XII.

KING of *SWEDEN*.

A

LETTER

Concerning the

Burning of *ALTENA*,

As related in the

Hiſtory of Charles XII.

Paris 25 *April* 1733.

THE great Difficulty we have in *France* of getting Books from *Holland*, is the Reaſon why the ninth Tome of the *Bibliotheque Raiſonnée* came but late to my Hands. And I will obſerve by the way, that if the reſt of the Journal is equal to the Pieces I have peruſed in it, it is a Misfortune for our Men of Letters in *France*, that they are not acquainted with that Work.

In Page 496. Part II. of the ninth Tome above mentioned, I found a Letter in which I am accuſed of aſperſing the

City of *Hamburgh* in the Hiſtory of *Charles* the twelfth.

A few Days ſince one Mr. *Richey* of *Hamburgh*, a Scholar and a Man of Merit; having honoured me with a Viſit, reviv-ed the Complaint I juſt now mentioned in the Name of his Fellow-citizens.

Here follows the Relation I gave, and what I my ſelf am obliged to declare. In the Heat of the unhappy War which made ſo dreadful a Havock in the North, the Counts of *Steinbok* and of *Welling*, the *Swediſh* Generals, formed *Anno* 1713, in the very City of *Hamburgh*, a Reſolu-tion to burn *Altena*, a Trading City, and Subject to the *Danes*; for the Commerce of this City began to flouriſh ſo much, that the *Hamburghers* grew a little Jealous of it.

This Reſolution was executed unmer-cifully in the Night of the ninth of *Ja-nuary*. Theſe Generals lay in *Hamburgh* that very Night; they lay in it the Tenth, Eleventh, Twelfth and Thirteenth; and dated from the laſt mentioned City the Letters they wrote to clear themſelves, from the Imputation of being the Au-thors of ſo barbarous a Cataſtrophe.

It is beſides certain, and the *Hamburg-hers* themſelves do not deny it, that the Gates

Gates of their City were ſhut againſt ſeveral of the Inhabitants of *Altena*, againſt old Men, and big-belly'd Women, who came to implore an Aſylum; and that ſeveral of theſe unhappy Wretches expired under the Walls of *Hamburgh*, frozen with Cold, and oppreſſed with Miſery, at the ſame time that their Country was burnt to Aſhes.

I was obliged to inſert theſe Particulars in the Hiſtory of *Charles* the Twelfth. One of the Perſons who furniſhed me with Materials, declares in his Letter, in the moſt poſitive Terms, that the *Hamburghers* had given Count *Steinbok* a Sum of Money, in order to engage him to deſtroy *Altena*, as being their Rival in Trade.

I did not however adopt ſo grievous an Accuſation. What Reaſon ſoever I may have to be convinced of the great Depravity of Mankind, I yet was never ſo Credulous with regard to Crimes. I have combated, and that efficaciouſly, more than one Calumny; and am even the only Man who dared to juſtify the Memory of Count *Piper*, by Arguments, at the Time that all *Europe* ſlandered him by Conjectures.

Inſtead therefore of following the Account which had been communicated to me, I contented my ſelf with relating, *That it was reported, ſome Hamburghers* had given a Sum of Money ſecretly to Count *Steinbok*. This Report became univerſal, and was founded on Appearances. An Hiſtorian is allowed to inſert Reports as well as Facts, and when he publiſhes a general Report, an Opinion, merely as an Opinion, and not as Truth, he is neither reſponſible for it, nor ought to be accuſed in any Manner for ſo doing. But when he is informed that this popular Opinion is falſe and ſlanderous, it is then his Duty to declare it, and to thank, in a publick Manner, thoſe who have undeceived him.

This is exactly my Caſe. Mr *Richey* hath proved to me the Innocence of his Fellow-citizens, and the *Bibliotheque Raiſonnée* hath alſo very ſolidly refuted the Accuſation levelled againſt the City of *Hamburgh*. The Author of the Letter againſt me, is only to blame for ſaying that I poſitively aſſerted that the City of *Hamburgh* was guilty; but he ought to have made a Diſtinction between the Opinion of one part of the North, which I gave as a vague, random Report, and the Affir-

mation

mation with which he charges me. Had I indeed declared, *That the City of* Hamburgh *purchaſed the ruin of the City of* Altena, I then wou'd have asked Pardon in the moſt humble manner for making ſuch an Aſſertion, being perſuaded that there is no Shame on theſe Occaſions, but to perſiſt in a Fault when it is proved to be ſuch. But I declare the Truth, in relating that ſuch a Report was ſpread; and I alſo declare the Truth, in aſſuring the World, that upon enquiring ſtrictly into this Report, I find it entirely groundleſs. I am alſo to declare, that *Altena* was infected with contagious Diſtempers at the Time of the Fire. The *Hamburghers* I am aſſured had no Hoſpitals, no Place where they might ſhelter from the reſt of the People, the old Men and the Women who died in their Sight. They therefore cannot in any manner be accuſed for refuſing them Admittance. We are always to prefer the Perſervation of our own City to the Safety of Strangers. I ſhall take the utmoſt care to have this Incident corrected in the New Edition of the Hiſtory of *Charles* the Twelfth, now printing at *Amſterdam*, and the whole ſhall be ſet down agreeable to the moſt

ſcrupulous

ſcrupulous Truth, which I always profeſs'd, and will prefer to all Things.

I alſo heard, that in ſome Weekly Papers, certain Letters of the Poet *Rouſſeau*, (as injurious as ill written) have been inſerted relating to the Tragedy of *Zayre*. This Author of ſeveral Plays, all of which were hiſſed off the Stage, cenſures a Dramatick Piece to which the World gave a pretty indulgent Reception, and this Man who hath writ ſo many impious Things, reproaches me publickly with having ſhown but little Reverence for Religion in a Tragedy exhibited with the Approbation of the moſt virtuous Magiſtrates, read by Cardinal *Fleury*, and played in ſome Religious Houſes. The publick will do me the Honour to believe, that I ſhall not loſe my Time in anſwering the Invectives of the Poet *Rouſſe*

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